

Library of The Theological Seminary

PRINCETON • NEW JERSEY



PRESENTED BY

John M. Krebs

BX 9315 .C427 1815 v.5
Charnock, Stephen, 1628-1680
The works of the late Rev.
Stephen Charnock

THE
WORKS

OF THE LATE

REV. STEPHEN CHARNOCK, B.D.

IN

NINE VOLUMES.

WITH A

PREFATORY DEDICATION AND MEMOIR,

BY

EDWARD PARSONS.

VOL. V.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR BAYNES, PATERNOSTER ROW; CONDER, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH
YARD; WILLIAMS, STATIONERS' COURT; AND ROBINSON, SON,
AND HOLDSWORTH, LEEDS.

—
1815.

CONTENTS.

	Page.
I. The Efficient of Regeneration, - - - - -	1
II. The Instrument of Regeneration, - - - - -	121
III. The Author of Reconciliation, - - - - -	181
IV. The Knowledge of God, - - - - -	519



THEOLOGICAL
EFFICIENT
OF
REGENERATION.

John 1. 13.

WHICH WERE BORN, NOT OF BLOOD, NOR OF THE WILL
OF THE FLESH, NOR OF THE WILL OF MAN, BUT OF
GOD.

PART I.

REGENERATION THE WORK OF GOD.

God appropriates this work to himself—Christ declares it to be his work—The scriptures every where ascribe it to him—His work in all respects—It is necessary this work should be of God—It is necessary with reference to himself—Necessary also as to the subject—As to the subject simply considered—As to the nature of the change—Suddenness of it—Excellence of it—The end of it—The means of it—Difference in the changes of men.

TWO doctrines were raised from these words in our former discourse :

1. That man in all his capacities is too weak to produce the work of regeneration in himself. This I have dispatched, and now proceed to the 2nd Doc-

trine—God alone is the *prime efficient cause* of regeneration.

It is *subjectively* in the creature, *efficiently* from God. Ezekiel's dry bones met not together of their own accord, *Ezek.* 37. 5, 6, or by chance, but were gathered by God, and inspired with life; and not only the last act of life, but the whole formation of them in every part, he particularly owns as the act of his own power; and doing every part of it by degrees, they should know by that admirable work upon them, that he was God. *I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring flesh upon you, and cover you with skin; and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord.* This work as much discovers the glory of his Deity, and speaks him God in a more illustrious manner than the creation of the world. We know him to be the Lord Jehovah by his creation of the world; but a clearer knowledge of him in his power is added by his regeneration of the soul. The sinews, flesh, skin, all the preparations to grace, are from God; as all the preparations of that mass of clay, for the breath of life in Adam, were from the power of God, as well as the living soul itself. Most do understand it of the recovery of the Jews from the captivity of Babylon; but certainly it hath a higher import, and respects the time of the gospel, and the renewing of life in the soul of all the Israel of God. 1. Because the prophecy extends further than the two tribes captivated in Babylon; for the bones are said to be *the whole house of Israel*, ver. 11, who despaired of ever seeing any good, complaining that their bones were dried; *our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts*, ver. 11. Which could not be rationally the complaint of the Jews, who had a promise that after seventy years' captivity, they should return, and therefore their case was not so desperate. 2. Because, he speaks of *putting his Spirit into them*, ver. 14; meaning thereby, that work he had spoken of in the

former chapter, *Ezek.* 36. 7, which certainly being a covenant of grace, respected the times of the gospel. If it be said, that it is meant of forming the church; it must also be meant of forming every member of it, since the least member of Adam was formed by God, as well as the whole body. Certainly if renewed men after some great falls, having still the root of habitual grace in them, cry to God out of a sense of their own insufficiency, for the creating a clean heart, as David doth; *Create in me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me, Psal.* 51. 10: If he then who had this root remaining, and had some sparks which presently were blown up upon Nathan's speech to him, cries out for a new creation; what need hath he then of an almighty breath, who hath not any warm ashes of grace, or any one string of a spiritual root in his soul? Whatsoever therefore is holy, good, and spiritual in us, we owe to the new creating grace of God. All graces are his *χαρίσματα*, his free donatives, over and above his common largesses to nature, a present from his infinite liberality.

I shall show in this discourse, 1. That God is the efficient. 2. That it is necessary he should be so. 3. From what principles in God it flows. 4. How God does it. 5. The use of it.

I. That God is the *efficient*.

1. God always appropriates this work to himself. He does so in *the first promise, I will put enmity, &c. Gen.* 3. 15. In which promise is included the whole work of redemption, and new creating man under another head, with another nature, which should not comply with the designs of Satan, or gratify the great enemy of God and mankind, by unravelling the work of God, and subjecting himself to misery. It was necessary to our happiness, that the league between Satan and us should be broken; that we should turn to God; hate the works of the devil, and join with the interest which Satan endeavoured to overthrow;

and God promises that he would do it, he challenges it as his own work; *I will put enmity*; he leaves it not to men or angels to begin this hostility. Every one therefore that is at a true variance with Satan, is God's workmanship created in Christ by a second creation, as well as he was created to a natural life in Adam by the first creation, *and created to good works, that he may walk in them, Eph. 2. 10.* That is, is fashioned by God to walk in ways contrary to those of Satan, which is the greatest enmity we can express to the devil, who envied God a service from the holiness of Adam's nature; and Satan having made that conquest, and gained man to be his friend, it is not easy to conceive how any lower power could unfasten this knot, and set them at variance, since Satan had both wit enough to humour man, and strength enough to keep him.

God appropriates this work to himself in the *times of the gospel*. No less than seven times, I will, he affixes to his promise of the covenant, as hath been observed before, *Ezek. 36. 25, 26, 27.* What seed was left to keep up the name of God among the Jews, was of his begetting; *Except the Lord of sabaoth had left us a seed; Rom. 9. 29*; cited out of *Isa. 1. 9.* Their standing was not their act, but God's: and *I have left me seven thousand, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, 1 Kings 19. 18*; others were left to themselves, these were signally wrought upon by his grace. Others are but instruments; God is the principal agent in all the seed of the church, scattered in the whole earth; *I will sow her to me in the earth, Hos. 2. 23*; alluding to the name Jezreel, which signifies the seed of God. If ever the sons of Japhet dwell in the tents of Shem, it must be by God's persuasion, *Gen. 9. 27.* The word rendered *enlarge*, signifies to allure. The *spirit of grace* is of God's effusion, *Zech. 12. 10.* It is God's pouring out a spirit of grace on them, before their looking up to God. (Where by the way observe a signal testimony of the Deity of

Christ; *they shall look upon me whom they pierced*; he that pours upon them the Spirit of grace, is he whom they pierced, which was the Lord Jehovah, ver. 8. For where in your bibles, Lord is written in great letters, the Hebrew word there is Jehovan; the highest name of God is here attributed to Christ.) And even in the last times he will still be the only agent in it. When God speaks of the Jews' dispersion, under which they are at this day, he owns this work upon their hearts, at last, to be an act of his own power, and of covenant mercy, *The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, Deut. 30. 6, &c.* which some of the Jews understand of the time of the Messiah; God will challenge this work as his own right to the end of the world.

2. *Christ appropriates it to God, and acknowledges it to depend only upon his will.* Had any other cause been in conjunction with God, our Saviour would not have deprived it of its due praise, nor with so much thankfulness and amazement admired the gracious pleasure of his Father, as he did; *At that time Jesus answered, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight, Matt. 11. 25.* At that time, after he had been discoursing of the judgments upon them for their refusal of the gospel, worse than upon Sodom and Gomorrah. It was God's pleasure not to reveal it to them; and God's justice to punish them for refusal, because they wilfully refused it; the outward teaching was to all, in the ministry of Christ; the inward revelation only to few, according to the good pleasure of God. Christ was the outward teacher, but God the inward inspirer; that others are not renewed by him, is not because he cannot, for he is Lord of heaven and earth; but because he will renew some and not others; our Saviour refers it here only to the good pleasure of God; he had erred much in ascribing it to God, if he

had had the assistance of any other cause. Why this part of the clay he had created was formed into the body of Adam and not another, had no other cause but his pleasure ; why this part of corrupted Adam is formed into a temple, a divine image, and not another, can be ascribed to no other but the same cause. He that formed Adam in the earthly paradise, forms every believer in the church, the spiritual paradise, and neither hath a co-worker nor motive without himself.

3. The *scripture* every where appropriates it to God. They are therefore called *his saints*, *Psal.* 34. 9, as being sanctified by him, as well as belonging to him ; *his people, the branch of his planting, the work of his hands*, peculiarly his, as being created for his glory ; *That I may be glorified*, *Isa.* 60. 21. Their fitness by grace for glory is the work of his hands. The vessels of wrath are fitted for destruction, not by God, but by themselves, *Rom.* 9. 22. But the vessels of mercy are prepared by him, *He had before prepared unto glory*, ver. 23. Adam lost himself, but whosoever of his posterity are recovered, are *wrought by God for glory*, *1 Cor.* 5. 5. It is observable that the apostle ascribes this in the whole frame of it to God, *But of him are you in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, &c.* *1 Cor.* 1. 30 ; because he would remove all cause of boasting in the creature : he not only set forth Christ at first as a principle of righteousness, and redemption, and sanctification, but engrafted in him, whosoever is in him, for the enjoyment of those privileges, and made him not only in general to the world, but *to us*, in the particular application, a principle of sanctification, as well as righteousness.

Union with Christ, engrafting in him, new creation, putting into another state, are all purely the work of God. He hath no sharer in it. As Christ *trod the winepress alone*, in the work of redemption : so God engrafts men alone, into this vine. As Christ was the sole worker of redemption, so is God the sole

worker of regeneration ; in him we are created, but solely by God's skill : Christ *the vine*, and believers *the branches* ; the one planted, and the other engrafted by the same husbandman, *John* 15. 1, 2 ; he only planted and dressed Christ for us ; he only plants and dresseth us in Christ. It is by *his own will*, not any other, that *he begat us*, *James* 1. 18 ; *Of his own will* ; his own good pleasure was the motive, his own strength the efficient : hence he is called *the father of spirits*, *Heb.* 12. 9, not so much (as some interpret it, and that most probably) as he is the father of souls by creation, as by regeneration, which adds a greater strength to the apostle's argument for submission to him, and patience under his strokes. He keeps in his own hand the keys of the heart. It is with this prerogative of God that Jacob silences Rachel, when she so impatiently cried out for children, as if she had a resolution to kill herself, if she had them not ; with this, *Am I in God's stead ? Gen.* 30. 1, 2. He only opens the heart, impregnates it with grace, and brings forth the fruit of holy actions, as Philo in his allegory descants upon the place. The Jews perhaps meant no less in that saying in their Cabala :* Abraham had not had Isaac, if a letter of the name of God had not been added to his name ; the power of God, a letter of his name, must go to regeneration. It is appropriated to none but God in scripture. To the whole Trinity without the conjunction of any creature. To the Father, as the Author, therefore called *Our Father*. To Christ, as the pattern ; to the Spirit, as the inspirer of that grace whereby we are made the sons of God. The very heathen have acknowledged this : some philosophers have affirmed, that the great virtue wherein they placed the happiness of man, could not be had but by the favour of God ; and all thought their heroes to be born of their gods.

* Nisi nomini, Abraham, litera He addita fuisset, Abraham non generasset.

And the scripture affirms that,

1. All *preparations* to this work, as well as the work itself, are of God. The removing indispositions, and the putting in good inclinations, is the work of the same hand: the taking away the heart of stone, as well as the giving a heart of flesh. He removes the rubbish, as well as rears the building; razes out the old stamp, and imprints a new; destroys sin, which is called the old man, and restores the new by the quickening of the Spirit. The preparations of the dust of the ground to become a human body, had the same author, as the divine soul where-with he was inspired.

2. *All the parts* of the new creature are of God. Faith which is the principal part of it, *is the faith of the operation of God*, Col. 2. 12; not but that love and other graces are wrought by God; but in this grace which is a constitutive part of the new creature, God comes in with a greater irradiation upon the soul, because it hath not one fragment or point in nature to stand upon, carnal reason and mere moral righteousness being enemies to it: whereas all other graces are but the rectifying the passions, and setting them upon right objects. Yet all these too own him as the author. Our knowledge of God is a light growing from his knowledge of us; we *know God* because we *are known of him*, Gal. 4. 9. The elective act of our wills is but a fruit of his choice of us; *You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you*, John 15. 16; our willing of him, is a birth of his willing us; our love, a spark kindled by his love to us. God first calls us *my people*, before any of us call him, *my God*, Hos. 2. 23. The moon shines not upon the sun, till it be first illuminated by it. God first shines upon us, before we can reflect upon him: he calls us, before we can speak to him in his own dialect: our coming is an effect of his drawing; and our power of coming, an effect of his quickening. Every member in Adam was a fruit of his power as well as

the whole body ; every line drawn in the new creature, is done by his pencil, as well as the whole frame.

3. The *acts of* the new creature. God not only gives us the habit of faith, but the act of faith ; *Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe, but also to suffer for his sake, Phil. 1. 29* ; by believing, is meant, the act of believing ; as by suffering, is meant, not only the power of suffering, but actual suffering : as the fruits upon the trees, at the first creation, were created, as well as the tree which had a power to bear. The very attention of Lydia to the gospel preached by Paul, was wrought by God, as well as the *opening of her heart, Acts 16. 14*. Our walking in his statutes is a fruit of his grace ; as well as the putting in his Spirit to enable us thereunto : the very act of motion is made by the head and heart ; if there be a failing of spirits there, if any obstruction that they cannot reach the indigent part, the motion ceaseth. David acknowledged God his continual strength in his holy pursuits ; *My soul follows hard after thee, Psal. 63. 8* ; but what was the cause ? *Thy right hand upholds me* ; his life and power issued out from the right hand of God. The graces of God's people stand in need of the irradiations of God, like the *Urim and Thummim*, before any counsel could be given by them.

4. The continuance both of *the power and acts*, are from God. Habitual grace is called the *fear of the Lord* put into the soul ; the continuance of it is by his constant sustentation, it is that we may not depart from him, *From upon him, Jer. 32. 40* ; from leaning upon him, or believing in him, as the word * imports. If that fear put in did once depart from us, we should no longer cleave to God : we cleave to him only because he ties us to himself, and cannot be continually with him, unless he *holds us by his right hand, Psal. 73. 23*. The grace that is wrought, as

well as the gospel which instrumentally wrought it, *is kept by the Holy Ghost*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 14; he begins every good work, and he performs it. He was the sole active cause in the creation of the faculties, and the principal cause in preserving them: he is the sole cause of the elevation of the faculties, and the preservation of them in that elevated state: as the virtue of the loadstone is not only the cause of the first attraction of the steel, but of its constant adhesion; therefore it is said, 1 *Cor.* 1. 21, *That God doth establish us*, not *hath* done: to note the continual influence of his grace upon us. It was the dropping of the two olive-trees that constantly fed the *lamps in the candlesticks*, *Zech.* 4. 2, 3.

Take this new birth in all the denominations of it, it is altogether ascribed to God. As it is a *call* out of the world, God is the herald, 2 *Tim.* 1. 9. As it is a *creation*, God is the Creator, *Eph.* 2. 10. As it is a *resurrection*, God is the quickener, *Eph.* 2. 5. As it is a *new birth*, God is the begetter, 1 *Pet.* 1. 3. As it is a *new heart*, God is the framer, *Ezek.* 36. 26. As it is a law in the heart, God is the penman, *Jer.* 31. 33. As it is a translation out of Satan's kingdom, and making us denizens of the kingdom of Christ, God is the translator, *Col.* 1. 13. As it is a *coming to Christ*, God is the drawer, *John* 6. 44. As it is a turning to God, God is the attracter.

2. The second thing, it is necessary God should be the efficient of regeneration. He is or none.

1. In regard of God.

1. As he is the *first cause of all things*. He is the Creator of the lowest worm, and the highest angel; the glimmering perfections of the least fly, as well as the more glittering eminencies of the angelical nature, are distinct beams from that fountain of light and power; shall not he then be the cause of the divine motions of the will, as well as of the natural motions of the creatures? Every perfection in a rational creature, or any other, supposes that perfection to be

somewhere essentially; every impression supposes a stamp that made it; every stream a fountain from whence it sprang; every beam a sun, or some lucid body from whence it darts.

Whence should this gracious work then be derived? Not from nature, which is contrary to it; not from Satan, who is destroyed by it: It must be then from God, since it must have some stable and perfect cause. He who was the cause of all the grace in the head, is also the cause of all the grace in the members: the same sun that enlightens the heavens, enlightens the earth; the grace that Christ had was the gift of God, *John* 3. 34, much more must it be his gift to us, though we had souls as capacious as his. If the head derived not his grace to himself, the members cannot; for Christ being a creature, in regard of his humanity, must necessarily be dependent; for to make any creature independent upon God, is to advance it above the degree of a creature-state, and make it God's fellow, yea, to have a godhead in itself, as being the first principle of its own being.

To say, any creature can move to God, without being moved by God, or live without his influence, is to make the creature independent on God in its operations; and if it be independent in its operations, it would be so consequently in its essence*. Besides, if it be not created by him, it may subsist without him, it stands in no need of his quickening. The believers in Scripture were very unadvised then to pray to God for his quickening and establishing grace, if he were not the enlivener and author of it. His power works in preservation as well as creation, *John* 5. 17; and whatsoever is dependent on him in preservation, is dependent on him in creation and the first framing. And if it does not depend upon him in preservation, it is not his creature, but it is a God. All creatures have a dependence upon something immediately superior

* Sicut quid se habet in operando sic & in essendo.

to them. The moon receives her light and chief beauty from the sun, which else would be but a dusky body; the earth, its influence from the heavens. In artificial things, the little wheels in a watch depend upon the greater; that upon the string; that in its motion upon the hand that winds it up. The higher any creature is, the more immediately it depends upon God in its production; the waters brought forth the fish; but God himself formed man.

2. As he is the *promiser* of it. The divine promise is only fulfilled by a divine operation; it is necessary then for the honour of his truth to be the performer of it. All his promises concerning this matter run in that strain, *I will, I will betroth thee to me for ever; I will betroth thee to me in righteousness, in judgment, in loving-kindness, and in mercy. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord, Hos. 2. 19.* The Lord promises by this of knowing him, all gracious works upon the soul, regeneration, faith, &c. for this knowledge is an effect of the covenant which God promises in that great copy of it; *They shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, Jer. 31. 34.* It is not a simple abstracted knowledge, for so the devils know God, and Christ crucified; but such a knowledge that implies faith, and love, and a new frame of soul. It is necessary his power should make good what his goodness hath promised. It was not necessary any word of promise should go out of his mouth, there was no engagement upon God to do it; but it is necessary this promise should be performed; though he were free before he promised, yet he is not free after he hath promised, because his truth engages him to perform it, and perform it as his own act, as much as his mercy moved him to promise it as his own act.

As mercy made it, so his mercy is as pressing for the performance: and there comes in a superadded obligation from that of his truth over and above his mercy, to perform it in the same manner he promised

it, and in all the circumstances of it. So that supposing that which cannot be supposed, that his mercy should repent of making it, he would not be true if he did not perform it. Besides, it consists not with his truth, not to perform that by himself, which he hath promised by himself; nor with his wisdom to leave that to an uncertain cause at the best, and further, a cause utterly unable, as every creature is, to produce that which he hath promised to do with his own hand, as the cleansing the soul, pouring clean water upon it, pouring out a spirit of grace, writing the law in the heart, which imply his own act principally in this affair, in concurrence with the means he hath ordained to that end. The performance of God's promise is as infallible, as the cause that made the promise. No power can perform that for another which he promises himself to do; for the thing itself may be done by another, yet not being done by the party promising to do it, it is not truly done, and in conformity to the promise made. If it were possible then to be done by any but a divine hand, it would not be done truly, because God promises it as his own act, and therefore the working it must be his own act in conformity to his truth.

3. As he hath the *foreknowledge* of all things. It is necessary God should foreknow every thing future, and that shall come to pass; this is a perfection necessarily belonging to God; and to imagine the contrary, is to frame an unworthy notion of God, and infinitely below the great Creator and Governor of the world. He therefore wills every thing; for if he foreknew any thing before he willed it in its self, or in its necessary causes, he foreknew nothing. If he did not will it, how can it come to pass? Therefore he did not foreknow that it would come to pass. If he did foreknow it, then he willed it, otherwise his foreknowledge depended upon an uncertain cause; and he might have judged that to come to pass which never might; unless the cause be determined by God, it is merely

contingent. He willing therefore a work of grace in such and such persons, did foreknow that it would be wrought, because he did will that it should be, and his working is done by an act of his will; *Whom he did foreknow, he did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. Rom. 8. 29.* The foreknowledge of God being stable and infallible, and being in this case a foreknowledge of what makes highly for the glory of all his attributes, can have no dependence upon an uncertain and fallible cause, but upon a cause as stable as his foreknowledge, which is his will, himself. His foreknowledge of this, is not a foreknowledge of it in any created cause, but in himself as the cause. Because, as it will appear further, no created cause could accomplish it.

2. In regard of the *subject* of this new birth.

1. In regard of the subject *simply considered*; the heart and will of man: none can work upon it but God, or have any intrinsic influence to cause it to exercise its vital acts. Angels, though of a very vast power, cannot work immediately upon the heart and will of any other creature, to incline and change it, by an immediate touch. All that they can do towards any moving the will, is by presenting some external objects, or stirring up the inward sensitive appetite to some passion, as anger, desire; whereby the will is inclined to will something. But the stirring up those natural affections in an unregenerate man, can never incline his will to good; for being the affections of the flesh, they are to be crucified. Angels also may enlighten the understanding, not immediately, but by presenting similitudes of sensible things, and confirming them in fancy: but to remove one ill habit from the will, or incline it to any good, is not in their power.

God gave an angel power to purify the prophet's lips with *a coal from the altar, Isa. 6. 6, 7*; but that was done in a vision; and a symbol or sign only that his uncleanness was removed. A coal could have no

virtue in it to purge spiritual pollutions from the spirit of a man. Neither can man change the will; men by allurements or threats, may change, or rather suspend the action of another; as a father that threatens to disinherit his son; or a magistrate, that threatens to punish a subject for his debauchery, may cause a change in the actions of such persons; but the heart stands still to the same sinful point, and may be vicious under a fair disguise. He only that made the will, can incline and *turn it as the rivers of waters; the heart of the king is in the hands of the Lord, Prov. 21. 1*, and so is every man's heart kept in the hands of him that created it, both cabinet and key. No man knows the heart, no; the heart itself knows not every thing which is in it.*

God knows all the wards in the heart, and knows how to move it. If a man could turn the heart of another, it could only be in one or two points; it cannot be conceived how he should alter the whole frame of it, make it quite another thing than it was before. The *spirit of man*, being *the candle of the Lord, Prov. 20. 27*, not to give light to him, but lighted by him, can only when it is out, be re-lighted, and, when it burns dim, be snuffed by the same hand. Or, suppose for the present, he could do this, it must be with much pains and labour, many exhortations and wise management of him upon several occasions. But to do this by a word, in a trice, to put a law into the heart in a moment; and give the hidden man of the heart possession of the will, that a man knows not himself how he came to be changed; this whole work bears the mark and stamp of God in the forehead of it. Men may propose arguments to another, and he may understand them if he hath a capacity; but no man can ever make another have a capacity, who is naturally incapable; it is God only can make the heart capable of understanding, he only can put a new instinct

* *θεῖον ἴσται πειθεῖν τὰς ψυχὰς* Athanas.

into it, and make it of another bent ; it is he that renews the spirit of the mind to enable it to understand what he proposes, and elevates the faculty to apprehend the reason of it.

2. In regard of the subject, extremely *ill-qualified*. Can any question the divinity of the work, when stones are made children to Abraham ? When waters of repentance are drawn out of a hard rock ? Aaron's dry rod made to bud and blossom, and bring forth fruit ? *Numb.* 17. 8. When souls deeply allied to the kingdom of darkness are translated into the kingdom of light ? To see habits strengthened by custom, in a consumption ; and hearts filled with multitudes of idols in several shapes, casting them out with indignation, and flourishing with new springing graces ! it is too great a miracle to be wrought by the hand of any creature. * Could any thing but the arm of the Lord, change the temper of the thief upon the cross, to advance further in the space of an hour in the kingdom of God, than all the apostles had done in the three years' converse with their Master ; to confess him, when one of the most eminent of them had denied him ; to be more knowing in an instant, than they had been in a long time, and acknowledge his spiritual kingdom, when they even after his resurrection, and just before his ascension, expected a temporal one ? *Will thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel ? Acts* 1. 6.

If a Socrates, or a Cato, or those braver lights among the heathen, were turned to God, the interest of God in the work might upon some seeming ground be questioned ; but when the leviathans in sin, drunkards, extortioners, adulterers, men guilty of the greatest contempt of God, and the light of nature, in whom lust had kept a peaceable possession in its empire for many years, are thoroughly changed, who can doubt but that such must indeed be *washed and sanctified by the Spirit of our God*, *1 Cor.* 6. 11.

What can this be but the will of God, since their hearts were so delightfully filled with evil, that they had no room nor love for any holy thought? It is not conceivable, that where sin has made such confusion and havoc in the moral economy, things should be set in order there, but by a power stronger both than sin, and the law, from whence sin derives its strength. It is no less than a divine miracle to renew an habituated sinner.

3. In regard of the *nature* of this new birth. It is a change of nature; a nature where there was as little of spiritual good, as there was of being in nothing before the creation. It is a change of stone into flesh; a heart that like a stone hath a hardness and settledness of sinful parts; a strong resistance against any instrument; an incorporation of sin and lust with its nature; where the heart and sin, self and sin are cordially one and the same, none can change such a nature but the God of all grace, who hath all grace to contest with all the power of old Adam. No man can change the nature of the meanest creature in the world: he may tame them, bring them to part with some of their wildness, but he cannot transform them; if no man can transform the lowest creature from one nature to another, much less can any but God transform man into another nature.

This nature is changed in every believer; for it is impossible a man should stand bent to Christ with his old nature predominant in him, any more than a pebble can be attracted by a loadstone, till it put on the nature of steel; an unrighteous nature cannot act righteously; it must therefore be a God who is above nature, that can clothe the soul with a new nature, and incline it to God and goodness in its operations. Now to see a lump of vice become a model of virtue, for one that drank in iniquity like water, to change that sinful thirst for a thirst after righteousness; to crucify his darling flesh, to be weary of the poison he loved, for the purity he hated; to embrace the gos-

pel terms, which not his passion but his nature abhorred ; to change his hating of duty, to a free-will offering of it ; to make him cease from a loathing the obligations of the law, to a longing to come up to the exactness of it ; to count it a burden to have the thoughts at a distance from God, when before it was a burden to have one serious thought fixed on him ; speaks a supernatural grace transcendently attractive, and powerfully operative. Heavy elements do not ascend against their own nature, unless they be drawn by some superior force : to see a soul weighed down to the earth, to be lifted up to heaven, must point us to a greater than created strength that caused the elevation. These acts are supernatural, and cannot be done by a natural cause ; that is against the order of working in all things ; for then the effect, as an effect, would be more noble than its cause.

4. In regard of the *suddenness* of it. Peter and Andrew were called, when they thought of nothing but their nets ; and Paul was changed by a word or two, who before was not only unwilling, but rebellious ; some have gone into a church wolves, and returned lambs. This change comes upon some that never dreamed of it, and hath snatched them out of the arms of hell ; upon others who have resisted with all their might any motion that way, and were never greater enemies to any, than to those that would check their sinful pleasures with such admonitions ; and yet these have been on the sudden surprized. What ground is there to ascribe any of this, but to a divine work ? Many have dropped in unto a sermon with no intention to stay, who have felt the power of God in their souls ; and who, after struggling for a while, like fish out of their element, have been taken into his hand. Have you never heard of some who have gone to make sport with a convincing sermon, or to satisfy lust with unclean glances, who have been made prisoners by grace before their return ? This quickness of the soul in coming to Christ, was promised to be the fruit of

the gospel, *They shall fear the Lord and his goodness*, when they should *seek the Lord and David their king*, *Hos. 3. 5.* the word פִּחַד signifies not only to *fear* but to *hasten* ; both significations may be joined together in the sense of the verse ; they shall make haste to fear the Lord and his goodness ; surely the power that performs it, is the same with the goodness which promised it.

Thus some of the disciples have followed Christ at the first call, and moved readily to him, as iron to the loadstone. For a man that was at a great distance from God, and any affection to him, to be filled on the sudden with a warm love and zeal for him, when nothing of interest could engage him (and sometimes it hath been with loss of friends, estate, yea life too) is as great a discovery of a divine hand, as if a fly were changed in to the shape and spirit of a hero ; because a spiritual change is more admirable than a natural ; and the more, by how much the enmity which was greater, is driven out, for a choice affection to rise up in its stead ; the season when such a work is wrought, is more significant of a divine force, when men have been in the heat and strength of the pursuit of their sinful pleasures, being then torn out of the embracements of lust with an outstretched arm of God.

5. In regard of the *excellency* of the new birth. Is it reasonable to think, that the image of God should be wrought by any other hand than the hand of God, or the divine nature be begotten by any thing but the divine Spirit ? None but God can impart to the depraved soul the divine nature. It is not a change only into the image of God with slight colours, an image drawn as with charcoal ; but a glorious image, even in the rough draught, which grows up into greater beauty by the addition of brighter colours : *Changed*, (saith the apostle) *into the same image from glory to glory*, 2 *Cor. 3. 18* ; glory in the first lineaments, as well as glory in the last lines. Is it not too beautiful

then, even in the first draught, to be wrought by any pencil but a divine? It is next to the formation of Christ, for it is an initial conformity to him. God is the fountain of all our good things; *If every good and perfect gift comes from him, James 1. 17*; shall not the best of beings be the author of the best of works? If believers are *light in the Lord, Eph. 5. 8.* they are no less light from him and by him who is the Father of lights. It is a *heavenly calling, Heb. 5. 1,* therefore a heavenly birth.

The new heart, the spiritual house wherein God dwells, as well as in the heavens, was not made with a less power and skill, than the earth, which is his footstool, or the heaven which is his throne. If none be able to make God a footstool, much less a throne, as Jerusalem, the church, is called in the times of the gospel, *Jer. 3. 17.* The embroideries and ornaments of the material tabernacle were not made by common art, but by a Bezaleel inspired by the *Spirit of God, Exod. 31. 3.* Can any but himself rear up a temple for the *God of heaven to dwell in? 1 Cor. 3. 9.* Or is the spiritual house of God fit to be made by any but that God that dwells in it? It was *according to the image of God* that we were first created; it is according to the *image of Christ* that we are new created, *Rom. 8. 29.* Who understands the image of the Son but the Father? Who knows the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him? The new creature according to the copy, can only be wrought by him to whom the copy is only visible.

It is for the honour of God to allow him to be the framer of all creatures in the rank of beings. Is it not a dishonour to him, not to acknowledge him the framer of the new creature in the rank of spiritual beings; since the latter is more excellent than the treasures of the earth, or the stars of heaven, than body or soul; since the image of God consists not so much in the substance of the soul, as in a *likeness to God in a holy nature, Eph. 4. 24.* To be a righteous

regenerate man, is more excellent than to be a man; the most glorious effect then must have the most glorious cause. One beam of this divine image is too excellent to be the workmanship of any but a divine hand. The very first regenerate thought, to the last dropping off of impurity, is from the same hand. The first drawing us from sin, much more the stripping us of it, is more admirable than the drawing us out of nothing.

6. The end of regeneration manifests it to be the work of God. It is to display his goodness. Since this was the end of God in the first creation, it is much more his end in the second. What creature can display God's goodness for him, or give him the glory of it, without first receiving it? Goodness must first be communicated to us, before it can be displayed or reflected by us. The light that is reflected back upon the sun by any earthly body, beams first from the sun itself. Both the subject and the end are put together; *The beasts of the field shall honour me; the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, to give drink to my people, my chosen: this people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise, Isa. 43. 20, 21.* The Gentiles shall have the gospel, who are beasts of the field for wildness, dragons for the poison of their nature, owls for their blindness and darkness. The waters of the gospel shall flow to them, to give drink to their souls. *This people have I formed for myself.* Even beasts, dragons, owls, if formed for himself, they could not be formed but by himself, who only understands what is fit for his own praise. How can such incapable subjects be formed for such high ends, without a supernatural power? *The branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified, Isa. 60. 21.* Planted by God, that God might be glorified by them.

As God only is the proper judge of what may glo-

rify him ; so he is the sole author of what is fitted to glorify him. Nothing lower than the goodness of God can instill into us such a goodness, as to be made meet to praise, serve, and love him ; such a holiness as may fit us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and enjoy him for ever. As infinite wisdom formed us in Adam, and moulded us with his own hand to be a model of his perfection ; so are we no less his workmanship in Christ by a second creation to good works ; which as they are ordained by the will of God, so they are wrought in us by the skill and power of God ; what is ordained positively by him and for him, is wrought by him.

The whole world consists but of two men and their offspring, the *first man Adam*, the *second man Christ* ; both they, and all in them, were created by God. It is a forming a creature for himself, for his own delight. What delight can God take in any thing but himself, and what is like himself ? Man in his best estate is vanity. As his being is, so are his operations. Vanity, and the operations flowing from thence, are no fit object for the delight of an infinite excellency and wisdom. What pleasure can he have in those things which are not wrought by his own finger ? Who knows how to dress any thing savoury and pleasant to God, but his own grace ? Can a finite thing touch an infinite being to enjoy him, without the operation of an infinite virtue ? Can God delight in any thing principally but himself, as he is infinitely good ; or in other things but as they come nearest to that goodness ? Whatsoever hath a resemblance to a superior being, must be brought forth into that likeness by something superior to itself.

Now since the ends of this work are so high as to fit us for his praise, his delight, and a fruition of him ; since it is to bring the interest of God into the soul, set him up highest in the heart, who before was trampled under our feet ; enthrone him as king in the

soul, cause us to oppose all that opposes him, cherish every thing that is agreeable to him, this must be his work or the work of none.

7. The *weakness of the means* manifests it to be the work of God. How could it be possible that such weak means that were used at the first plantation of the gospel, should have that transcendent success in the hearts of men, without a divine power? That a doctrine attended with the cross, resisted by devils with all their subtlety, by the flesh with all its lusts, the world with all its flatteries, the wise with all their craft, the mighty with all their power, should be imprinted upon the hearts of men; a doctrine preached by mean men, without any worldly help, without learning, eloquence, craft, or human prudence; without the force, favour, or friendship of men, should get place in men's hearts, without a divine inspiration, cannot well be imagined.

If it be said there were miracles attending it, which wrought upon the minds of men. It is true. But what little force they had in our Saviour's time, the scripture informs us, when they were ascribed to Beelzebub the prince of devils: Though miracles did attend it after the ascension of our Saviour; yet the apostle ascribes not so much to them as the means, as he does to the *foolishness of preaching*; it was that which was the *power of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 18; it was that *whereby God saved them that believe*, 1 Cor. 1. 21. But the greatest change that ever was wrought at one time, was at the first descent of the Spirit, by a plain discourse of Peter's, *Acts 2*, extolling a crucified God before those that had lately taken away his life, those that had seen him die, a doctrine which would find no footing in their reasons, filled with prejudice against him, and had expectations of a temporal kingdom by him: must not this change be ascribed to a higher hand, which removed their rooted prejudices, and vain hopes, and brought so many as three thousand over at once? If there be *diversities of operations*, it

is the same God that works all in all, 1 Cor. 12. 6. He conveys this treasure in earthen vessels, that the power might appear to be of God, and not of men, 2 Cor. 4. 7. Such weak means as earthen vessels, cannot work such miraculous changes.

Therefore perhaps it was that the preaching of Christ in his humiliation had so little success attending it, that nothing should be ascribed to the word itself, but to the power of God in it; to evidence that success depended on the good pleasure of God, who would not make his preaching in person so successful as that in his Spirit; which appears by Christ's thanksgiving to his Father for revealing these things to babes, and not to the wise; *Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight, Luke 10. 21.* Have you never heard of changes wrought in the spirits of men against their worldly interest, when they have been made the scorn of their friends, and a reproach to their neighbours? Can the weakness of means write a law so deep in the heart, that neither sly allurements nor blustering temptations can raze out? That a law of a day's standing in the heart, should be able to match the powers of hell, the cavils of the flesh, and discouragements from the world, when there are no unanswerable miracles now to seal the gospel, and second the proposals of it with amazement in the minds of men?

The weakness of the means, and the greatness of the difficulties, speaks it not only to be the finger but the arm of God, which causes the triumphs of the foolishness of preaching. When the proposal crosses the interest of the flesh, restrains the beloved pleasure, teaches a man the necessity of the contempt of the world, and that men should exchange their pride for humility, the pleasure of sin for a life of holiness; for a man not only to cease to love his vice, but extremely to hate it; to have divine flights, when before he could not have a divine thought; to put off earthly affections for heavenly; and all this by the

foolishness of preaching; it is an argument of a divine power, rather than any inherent strength in the means themselves.

8. The *differences in the changes of men*, evidence this to be the work of God, and that it is from some power superior to the means which are used. As God puts a difference between men in regard of their understandings, revealing that to one man which he doth not to another; so he puts a difference between men in regard of their wills, working upon some and not upon others; working upon some that have known less, and not working upon some that have known more; some embracing it, and others rejecting it.

We may see, 1.

The difference of this change in men under *the same means*. One is struck at a sermon, when multitudes return unshaken; why is not the case equal in all, if it were from the power of the word? How successful is Peter's discourse, closely accusing the Jews of the murdering of their Lord and Saviour, which is the occasion of pricking *three thousand* hearts? Yet Stephen using the same method, and close application of the same doctrine, *Acts 7. 52*, had not one convert upon record. While Peter's hearers were *pricked* in their hearts, these *gnashed* with their teeth, *ver. 54*. The corruption of the former was drawn out by the pricking of their souls; the malice of the latter exasperated by the cut of their hearts. What reason can be rendered of so different an event from one and the same means in several hands, but the overruling pleasure of God? The reasons were the same, set off with the same human power; the hearers were many, of the same nation, brought up in the reading of the prophets, full of the expectations of a Messiah; they had both reasons and natural desires for happiness, as well as the other; yet the one are turned to lambs, and the others worse lions than before; the bloody fury of the one is

calmed, and the mad rage of the other is increased. The grace of God wrought powerfully in the one, and lighted not upon the other. *Two are grinding at the same mill of ordinances, one is taken, and the other left.* Man breathes into the ears, and God into what heart he pleases.

2. The differences in the changes of men under *less means*. One is changed by weaker means; another remains in his unregeneracy under means in themselves more powerful and likely: some are wrought upon by whispers, when others are stiff under thunders: the Ninevites by one single sermon from a prophet, are moved to repentance; the people of Capernaum by many admonitions from a greater than all the prophets, seconded with miracles, are not a jot persuaded; some remain refractory under great blasts, while others bend at the lighter breathings. One man may be more acute than another, of a more apprehensive reason; yet this man remains obstinate, whilst another becomes pliable. Whence does this difference arise, but from the will of God drawing the one, and leaving the other to the conduct of his own will, since both will acknowledge what they are advised to, to be their interest, to be true in itself, necessary for their good, yet their affections and entertainment are not the same? Some of those Jews who had heard the doctrine of Christ, seen the purity of his life, and the power of his miracles, admired his wisdom, yet crucified his person; they expected a Messiah, yet contemned him when he came; when the poor thief, who perhaps had never seen one miracle, nor heard one sermon of our Saviour, believes in him, acknowledges him to be the Son of God, whom he saw condemned to the same death with himself; and dies a regenerate man under great disadvantages; a figure, saith one, of all the elect, who shall only be saved by grace, and a clear testimony of an outstretched arm of grace. Those that our blessed Sa-

viour admonished only as a doctor and teacher, were unmoved, none stirred but those he wrought upon as a Creator.

3. Difference of the success of the *same means in different places*. How various was the success of the apostles in several parts of their circuits? Paul finds a great door of faith opened at Corinth, and in Macedonia, and his nets empty at Athens; multitudes flocking in at one place, and few at another. He is entertained at Corinth, stoned at Lystra, *Acts* 14. 19, in danger of his life at Jerusalem; while the Galatians were so affected with the gospel, that they *could have pulled out their eyes for him*. The apostle was the same person in all places; the gospel was the same, and had a like power in itself; men had the same reasons, they were all fragments from the lump of Adam; the difference must be then from the influence of the divine Spirit, who rained down his grace in one place, and not in another; on one heart, and not on another; who left darkness in Egypt, while he diffused light in Goshen.

4. Difference in the *same person*. What is the reason that a man believes at one time under the proposal of weak arguments, and not at another, under stronger? It is not *ex parte objecti*, for that was more visible and credible in itself, when attended by strong arguments, than when accompanied with weaker. Perhaps God hath stricken a man's conscience before, and he hath undone that work, shaken off those convictions: he hath contended with his Maker, and mustered up the power of nature against the alarms of conscience; struggled like a wild bull in a net, and broke it, and blunted those darts which stuck in his soul; he hath afterwards been inclosed again, and the arrow shot so deep, that with all his pulling he could not draw it out; what but a divine hand holds it in, in spite of all the former triumphs of nature? How come convictions at last to be fixed upon men, which many a time before did but flutter about

the soul, and were soon chased away? And God by such a method keeps up the honour of his grace in men after regeneration, and teaches them the constant acknowledgment of his power in the whole management. Do we not daily find, that the same reasonings and considerations which quicken us at one time in the ways of God, stir us not at another, no more than a child can a millstone? That we are quickened by the same word at one time, under which we were dull and stupid at another? And the same truth is deliciously swallowed by us, which seemed unsavoury at another, because God accompanies it with a secret virtue at one time more than another? Hereby God would remind us to own him as the author of all our grace, the second grace as well as the first.

Upon all these considerations this can be no other than the work of God. Can a corrupt creature elevate himself from a state of being hated by God, to a state of being delighted in by him? Satan's work none can judge it to be; the destroyer of mankind would never be the restorer; the most malicious enemy to God would never contribute to the rearing a temple to God in the soul, who hath usurped God's worship in all parts of the world. Good angels could never do it, they wonder at it; the wisdom of God in thus creating all things in Jesus Christ, is *made known to them by it*, Eph. 3. 9, 10. They never ascribed it to themselves; if they did, they could never have been good, their goodness consisting in praising God, and giving him his due. Good men never did it; the first planters of the gospel, whereby it is wrought, always gave God the praise of it, and acknowledged both their own action, and the success, to be the effect of the grace of God, and upon every occasion admired it; *It was the hand of the Lord, and the grace of God*, Acts 11. 21, 23.

PART II.

THE ORIGIN OF REGENERATION, &c.

Displays the mercy and goodness of God—The sovereignty of God—The truth of God—His wisdom—His holiness—His power—The regenerating power of God greater than that displayed in creation—Greater than that which wrought the resurrection of Jesus—The influence of these considerations—Produce thankfulness—Humility—Lively exercise of faith—Attentions to the operations of God—Despair of human strength—Looking wholly to omnipotence.

WE now proceed III. to enquire,

From what *principles* in God regeneration flows, or what perfections of God are eminent in this work of regeneration. What is observable in the forming Christ in the womb of the virgin, is observable in the forming Christ in the heart of a believer. Grace to chuse her to be the holy vessel; sovereignty to fix upon her rather than any other of the lineage of David; truth to his promise in forming him in the womb of a virgin, and one of the house of David; wisdom and power in the formation of him in a virgin's womb, above the power of nature; mercy bears the first sway as the motive of the decree, but in a

way of sovereignty to call out some, and not others ; truth to himself obliges, after sovereign mercy had made the resolution ; wisdom steps in to contrive the best way to accomplish what mercy had moved, and sovereignty had decreed ; holiness rises up as the pattern ; and power rides out for the execution. Mercy moves, sovereignty decrees, truth obliges, wisdom counsels, holiness regulates, power executes.

1. Mercy and goodness is a principal perfection of God illustrious in this work. *Born not of the will of man, but of God*, of the will of his mercy. Plato thought that heroes were born *ἐξ ἰπουτος θεῶν*, the love of God ; divine love brings forth an heroic christian into the world ; all outward mercies are streams of God's goodness ; but those are but trifles if compared with this. There is as much of God in imparting the holiness of his nature, as in imputing the righteousness of his Son. We are justified by Christ, quickened by grace, saved by grace ; grace is the source of every spiritual blessing. To be delivered from places and company wherein we have occasions and temptations to sin, is an act which God owns as the fruit of his mercy. *I brought thee out of the land of Ur of the Chaldees*, Gen. 15. 7, an idolatrous place ; it is a greater fruit of his goodness to be delivered from a nature which is the seed-plot of sin. *He heals our* backsliding nature, because he *loves us freely*. It is therefore called grace, which is not only goodness and mercy, but goodness with a more beautiful varnish and ornamental dress.

Therefore in this take notice of the *peculiarity* of mercy. Such a goodness that not one fallen angel ever had, or ever shall have a mite of ; neither did mercy excite one good thought in God of new polishing any of those rebellious creatures ; mercy cast no eye upon them, but justice left them to their malicious obstinacy. That the rivers of living waters should refuse to run in such a channel, or flow out of such a source, to run in the heart of a man more muddy !

As peculiar grace fixed upon the very flesh of Christ, to be united to the second person; so the like grace fixes upon this or that particular soul, to be united to the body of Christ.

That singular love which chose Christ for the head, chose some men in him to be his members, *Eph.* 1. 4. And the anointing which is upon the head, is poured out by such a peculiarity of love upon the members, not only by an act of his power as God, but by an act of appropriated goodness, *thy God, Heb.* 1. 9. God anoints his fellows with that holy, gracious unction, as their God, not only as God; for anointing him as the head, under that particular consideration, he anoints his fellows, his members, under the same consideration too, because he is as well their God, the God of the members, as well as the God of the head, for they are his fellows in that unction: the difference lies in the greater portion of grace given to the human nature of Christ. And the apostle Peter, intimates in his thanksgiving to God, that God begat us as the *Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*; *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, *1 Pet.* 1. 3; the paternal affection he bears to Christ, being the ground of the regeneration of his people; the paternal affection first fixing upon Christ, then upon others in him. Indeed it is a peculiar fatherly affection.

In his mercy to the world he acts as a rector or *governor*; in that relation he proposes laws, makes offers of peace, urges them in his word, strives with them by his Spirit, enduing them with reason, and deals with them as rational creatures; he uses afflictions and mercies, which might soften their hearts, did they not wilfully indulge themselves in their hardness. This is his rectoral mercy, or his mercy as a governor, and as much as his relation of a governor can oblige him to. If men will not change their lives, is God bound as a governor to force them to it, or not rather to punish them for it?

But in regeneration there is a choicer affection, whereby besides the relation of a governor, he puts on that of a *Father*, and makes an inward and thorough change in some which he hath chosen into the relation of children : as a father, who cannot persuade his son lying under a mortal distemper, to take that medicine which is necessary for saving his life, will compel him to it, open his mouth, and pour it in; but as he is a governor of his servant, he will provide it for him, and propose it to him; to do thus is kindness to his servant, though he does not manifest so peculiar an affection as he does to his son. God governs men as he is the author of nature; he renews men as he is the author of grace: he is the lawgiver and governor; it does not follow that where he is so, he should be the new Creator too; this is a peculiar indulgence.

As there is a *peculiarity* of mercy, so there is the *largeness* of his mercy and goodness in this work. It was his goodness to create us, but a full sea of goodness made us new creatures; *Who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 3. κατὰ τὸ πολὺ ἄνθρωπος εἰς εὐχρίαν. His *οὐκ ἔσται* mercy, without any other motive; much mercy, without any parsimony; not an act of ordinary goodness, but the deepest kindness, an everlasting spring of goodness, an exuberance of goodness. The choice love he bears to them in election, cannot be without some real act: it is a vain love that does not operate: one great part of affection is to imitate the party beloved; but since that is unworthy of God to imitate a corrupt creature, he performs the other act of love, which is to assimilate us to himself, and bring us into a state of imitation of him, endowing us with principles of resemblance to him. It is abundant mercy to love them; it is much more goodness to render them worthy of his love, and inspire them with those qualities, as effects of his love of benevolence, which may be an occasion of his love of complacency.

Worldly mercies do many times, yea for the most part (if you view the whole globe of the earth) consist with his hatred ; but this is a beam from a clear sun. At best other benefits are but the mercies of his hand, this of his heart. In those he makes men like others of a higher rank, in this like himself.

This goodness is *greater* than that displayed in creation. It is more an act of kindness to reform that which is deformed, than to form it at the beginning ; because it is more to have a happy than a simple being. To repair what is decayed, is a testimony of greater goodness, than at first to raise it. Creation is terminated to the good of a mutable nature, regeneration is terminated to a supernatural good, and partaking of the divine nature. The creation was an emanation of his goodness, never intituled the work of his grace. Man's first uprightness was an impress of God ; his second uprightness is far more pleasing to him, as being the fruit of his Son's death, wherein all his attributes are more highly glorified. It is a regeneration by the *resurrection of Christ*, 1 Pet. 1. 3, that being the perfection of it, includes his death, which is the foundation of it, as the perfection of a thing includes the beginning.

God pronounced all the structures of the first creation, good ; but not with those magnificent titles of his delighting in it, forming it for himself, that it might show forth his praise ; which expressions testify a greater efflux of his goodness in this second creation. Nor did Christ ever say his delight was in that, or in that one man Adam, but in the sons of men, of apostate Adam, as to be redeemed and renewed by him after their apostacy, *my delights were with the sons of men*, Prov. 8. 31. What sons of men ? The exhortation, ver. 32, intimates it, those that are his children renewed by him ; that hearken to him and keep his ways. God pronounced it good, but not his treasure, his portion, his inheritance, his *segullah*, his house, his diadem.

All those things which he made, even the noblest heaven, as well as the lowest earth, he overlooks and speaks slightly of them, *all those things hath my hand made, and all those things have been, &c**, Isa. 66. 1, 2, to fix his eyes upon a contrite spirit, a renewed nature : he speaks of them as things passed away, and is intent only upon the new creation ; values it above heaven and earth, and all the ceremonial worship. What is the object of his greatest estimation, partakes of a greater efflux of his goodness to make it so. And the apostle Peter aggrandizes this abundant mercy in regeneration, from the term *unto a lively hope*, not such an uncertain hope, as Adam had when he was fullest of his mutable uprightness ; † a living hope, that grows up more and more into life, till it comes to an *inheritance that fades not away* as Adam's did. Surely there is more of goodness in the Spirit's brooding over a sinful soul, to bring forth this beautiful frame, than in brooding over the confused mass to bring forth a world.

But again, *all the grace and goodness* of God is employed in regeneration. In the creation you cannot say, all the goodness of God was displayed, as not all his power, nor all his wisdom ; for as to his power, he might have made millions of worlds inconceivably more beautiful and more wisely contrived ; for though there be no defect of wisdom and power, yet neither of those attributes were exerted to that height that they might have been ; so for his goodness, he might have created millions of more angels and men than he did, with as, and more illustrious natures ; for a man may conceive something more than God hath displayed in the creation, as to the extensiveness of his perfections at least. But in this God hath displayed, as it may seem, the utmost of his grace : for no man or angel can conceive a higher grace than what God shows in this, of beginning in man a likeness to himself, and perfecting it hereafter to as high a pitch as a

* אֵינִי יוֹדֵה

† ἐλπὶδα ζῶσαν.

creature is capable of. Therefore called *unsearchable riches of Christ*, *Eph.* 3. 7.

A further good cannot be imagined or found out than what is there displayed. Therefore the apostle Peter speaks of God, as effectually calling us into his eternal glory by Christ, under the title of *the God of all grace*, *1 Pet.* 5. 10; which calling includes all preparation for glory. All grace does not less fit us for it, than call us to it; there is more of grace in fitting us for it, than barely in calling us to it; and the calling itself hath more of grace in it, than the giving the possession of that inheritance you are called unto. It is not so high a favour in a prince, actually to set his royal bride in the throne with him, as to call her to, and prepare her for, so high a dignity. To prepare a soul for it by regeneration, is an act of pure grace; to give it after a preparation for it, is an act of truth as well as grace: nothing obliged him to the first, his promise binds him to the latter. What if I should say, this renewing of us, and subduing our sins in us, is a greater *act of grace* than a bare remission! *Micah* 7. 18, 19, seems to favour it: to pardon us is an act of his delightful mercy; but to subdue our iniquities is an act of his tenderest compassion: mercy is there joined with pardon: and compassion with subduing: and the latter expression, *Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea*, may refer to both those acts of grace against the guilt and impurity of sin.

In the work of regeneration you see further, the *freeness* of his mercy is manifested. It is as free as election, *Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings*, *Eph.* 1. 3, 4, (of which regeneration is none of the meanest) *according as he hath chosen us in him*.* It is as free in the stream as it is in the fountain. Jesus Christ is as freely formed in us, as we were freely chosen in him; as freely *quoad nos*, as to us; not in regard of Christ, who merited the former, though not the latter. It is his own mercy, *1 Pet.* 1. 3. *his*

* καθὼς ἐξελέξατο.

own will, James 1. 18, not moved by any other ; as we do many things by the will of others when our own are not free, in which are mixed acts. It is in regard of this freeness called grace. Supposing God would create man, and for such an end as to enjoy blessedness, he could not create him otherwise than with an universal rectitude ; because had God created him with a temper contrary to his law, he had been the author of his sin.

Some therefore call not the righteousness of Adam, grace, because it was a perfection due to his nature upon his creation. But there was no necessity upon God to bestow new creating grace, after he had stripped himself of the righteousness of his first creation. And also supposing God will restore man to that end from which he fell, and refit him for that blessedness ; he cannot fit him otherwise than by restoring him to that righteousness, as a means of attaining that blessedness, Yet both these are free, because the original foundation of both is free. God might chuse whether he would create man when he was nothing, and chuse whether he would restore man when he was fallen. Yet there is more freedom in this latter than in the former, in regard of the measures of the new created righteousness, and in regard of the immutability of it : in regard also of demerit. Adam's dust, before creation, as it could merit nothing, so it had an advantage above us, that it could not lie under demerit. But we after the fall are in a state of damnation, *children of wrath* : so that regeneration is not a creating us from nothing but recovering us from a state, worse than nothing. In regard that man was miserable, he was capable of mercy ; but, as he was a criminal, he was an object of severity ; that is free mercy to renew any man by grace, when he might have damned him by justice : to work him for glory, when he had wrought himself for damnation : the apostle therefore excludes all works whatsoever from any meritoriousness in this case ; *Not by works of righteousness, which we*

have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. 3. 5.

I say, he excludes all works, because not one work, as good, was in being before the renewal of the soul, for so ver. 3 plainly implies, when he concludes all men, himself too, in a state incapable of doing any thing that was good ; the honour of his truth indeed excites him to perfect it ; but his grace only, without any other motive, moves to bestow it. All the grace you have in regeneration sprung only from this ; the righteousness you are arrayed with, the flames of love in your hearts, the flights of your faith, cost you nothing, they were all the births of love. Goodness decreed all when you were nothing, grace formed all when you were worse than nothing ; your faith is the *faith of God's elect*, Tit. 1. 1. New creatures were chosen to faith by grace ; and by the same grace was faith formed in the womb of the soul : electing grace preceded ; renewing grace followed ; the stream cannot be merited when the spring was free. Regeneration is an accessory to election. No man can merit the principal, therefore not the accessory.

2. As mercy and goodness, so the *sovereignty* of God, is illustrious in this work. Of God, in the text, is *of the will of God*. The covenant runs in a royal style ; *I will put my Spirit into them ; I will give a heart of flesh*, of my own free motion, and good pleasure, like the patents of princes. God reserves this in his own power, to give to whom he pleases ; Cameron* saith, that faith which is a great constitutive part of regeneration, was not purchased meritoriously by Christ's death ; and though Christ gives us faith as well as repentance, yet he does that not as considered as a satisfier of God's justice in his death, but as God's commissioner in his exaltation, being empowered by God to give the conditions, upon which they agreed

* Cameron opera. p. 531. col. 1.

together in the first compact about the work of mediation, unto all those that God had given him to satisfy for.

Whether this opinion be well grounded or not, I will not determine; yet the making it depend solely upon election, and to be given as a fruit of election, that hereby we may be partakers of Christ, makes it more fully depend upon the sovereignty of God. God renews when he pleases; *The wind blows where it listeth, John 3. 8.* To some he affords means, to others not; he deals not with every nation as he dealt with Israel. In some he works by means; to others he gives only the means without any inward work; it is his pleasure that he works upon any one to will; his good pleasure that he gives to any one to do; *of his good pleasure, Phil. 2. 13:* some hear the word; others the Spirit in the word: some feel the striking of the air upon their ear; others the stamp of the Spirit upon their hearts. Who chose this rough stone to hew and polish, and let others lie in the quarry? Who frames this for a statue, a representation of himself, and leaves another upon the pavement? What does all this result from, but his sovereign pleasure?

1. No *ultimate reason* can be rendered for this distinction, *but God's sovereignty.* * We can render an immediate reason of some actions of God; why the heavens are round; because that is the most capacious figure, and fittest for motion; Why the sun is the centre of the world, as some think, because it may at a convenient distance, enlighten the stars above, and quicken the things below; why our hearts are in the midst of our bodies; because they may more commodiously afford heat to all the members: so also, why God loved Adam; because he saw his own image in him: why he sends judgments upon the word; because of sin: why he saves believers, and condemns unbelievers; because they receive the grace of Christ,

* Amiraunt. Sermon sur 2 Phil. 13. p. 28, &c.

those reject it. We have not recourse immediately to God's will for a reason; the nature of the things themselves affords us one, obvious to us.

But no reason can be rendered of other actions of God, but his good pleasure: Why he chose Abraham above other men, and delivered him from Ur of the Chaldees; why Israel above other nations; since all other men and nations descended from Adam and Noah, and they were in their natures equally corrupt with others; they were not in themselves better than others; nor other nations worse than they. So in Esau and Jacob, why the elder should serve the younger, since they both issued from the same parents, were equally depraved in their nature, had original sin equally conveyed to them by their parents; no reason can be rendered, but the will of God.

* So if it be asked, why men are condemned? because they do not believe; Why do they not believe? because they will not. God hath given them means and faculties. If you ask, why God did not give them grace to believe and turn their wills? no other answer can be given, but because he will not. It is his free-will to chuse some and not others. Election is put upon his pleasure; *predestinated according to the good pleasure of his will, Eph. 1. 5*: And the making known the mystery of his will is put upon his pleasure; *Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, Eph. 1. 9*. As God regards us absolutely, it is rather mercy than his good pleasure. Why hath he changed our wills? because he loved us, and bare good will to us in his everlasting purpose, to which he was incited by his own mercy.

But if we compare ourselves with others, and ask why he renews this man and not that? Then it is rather an act of the sovereign liberty of his will; for there cannot be the result of any reason from any

thing else: he fixes his compassions where and upon whom he pleases. The apostle joins mercy and this sovereignty of his will together; *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion, Rom. 9. 15.* He is so absolute a Sovereign that he will give no account of these matters, but his own good pleasure. Why he renews any man, is merely voluntary; why he saves renewed men, is just; why he justifies those that believe, is justice to Christ, and mercy to them; but why he bestows faith on any, is merely the good pleasure of his will. The pharisees believed not, because they *were not of Christ's sheep, John 10. 26*; that is, they were not given to Christ by the Father, as is intimated, ver. 29. And the prosperity of those which are given to Christ is resolved wholly into the pleasure of God; *the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand, Isa. 53. 10.* In all our searches into the cause of this, we must rest in his sovereign pleasure; our Saviour himself renders this only as a reason of his distinguishing mercy, wherein himself does, and therefore we must acquiesce; *Even so, O Father, for so it pleased thee, Matt. 11. 27.*

2. He may well do so, because he is no *debtor* to any man in the way of grace. There is nothing due to man but death, that is his wages; the other is a gift, *Rom. 6. 23*; *To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, to them it is not given, Matt. 13. 11.* Who shall controul him in the disposal of his own goods; Who shall say unto him, *What doest thou.* Grace is his own treasure; if he gives the riches of it to any, it is his pleasure: If he will not bestow a mite on any man, it is no wrong. *If any man hath given to him, it shall be recompensed to him again, Rom. 11. 35.* It is not unjust with God to deny every man grace; it is not then unjust to deny a great part of men this grace: *Who hath enjoined him his way?* saith Job; or, *Who can say, Thou hast wrought iniquity, Job. 36. 23.* He is not

to be taught by man how to govern the world: neither can any man justly blame him, if they judge aright of his actions.

* Though every man is bound to endeavour the conversion of others; and every good man hath so much charity, that he would turn all to righteousness if he could; and though the love of God is infinitely greater than man's; it cannot be argued from thence that therefore God should renew every man. This charity in man is a debt he owes to his neighbour by communion of blood, upon which the law of charity is founded, which obliges him to endeavour the happiness and welfare of his neighbour: but God is free from the engagements of any law, but the liberty of his own will; he is under no government but his own; he hath none superior, none equal with him, to enjoin him his way, and to prescribe him rules and methods. If he gives any favour to man, it is his pleasure; if man improves it well, God is not indebted to him, and obliged to give him more; no more than a father is bound to give his son a new stock, because he hath improved well the first he hath intrusted him with; it depends only upon his pleasure.

3. God's *proceedings* in this case do wholly declare it. In the first gift of his people to Christ he acted like a God greater than all in a way of supereminent sovereignty; *My Father which gave them me, is greater than all, John 10. 29.* He acts as a potter with his clay: he softens one heart, and leaves another to its natural hardness. He converts Paul, a persecutor; but none of the other pharisees who spurred him on in that fury, and commissioned him to it; he snatches some from the embracements of lust, while he suffers others to run their race to hell. David, by grace, is made a man after God's own heart; and Saul left to be a man after his own will: some he changes in the heat of their pursuit of sinful pleasures; others he

wounds to death by his judgment : the reason of the latter is deserved justice ; the reason of the other is undeserved pleasure. He chooses the mean things of the world to be highest in his favour, and passes over those that the world esteems most excellent. *Not many wise, not many mighty*, is his sovereign method.

The amiable endowments esteemed by the men of the world, have no influence upon him. He acts in this way with his own people : he gives sometimes to will, when he does not give presently to do : he distributes greater measures of grace to one than to another ; he sometimes excites them by his grace, sometimes lets them lie as logs before him, that he may be owned by them to be a free agent. And further, it must needs be thus, because God does not work in regeneration as a natural agent, and put forth his strength to the utmost : as the sun shines, and the fire burns, *ad extremum virium*, unless a cloud interpose to hinder the one, or water quench the other : but as an arbitrary agent, who exerts his power according to his own will, and withholds it according to his pleasure. For there are two acts of his sovereign will, one whereby he commands men to do their duty, promises rewards, and threatens punishment ; but the subject is to be disposed to do God's will of precept. Here comes in another act of his sovereignty, whereby he wills the disposing such and such hearts to the accepting of his grace, and wills not to give others that grace, but leave them to themselves ; this we see practised by God almost in every day's experience.

3. The *truth* of God is apparent in this work. Truth to his own purpose ; *Who hath called us with a holy calling, according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Jesus Christ before the world began*, 1 Tim. 1. 9. Sovereignty first singles this or that man out ; and truth to that firm and immutable counsel, and that resolve in his own mind, steps in to excite his holiness, wisdom, and power, to make every such per-

son conformed to the image of his Son. It was not from any truth respecting any condition annexed to any promise he had made, which he might find in the creature; for the apostle plainly excludes it, *not according to our work*; for what motion can our work in a state of nature cause in God, but that of anger and aversion arising from truth to his threatening, the condition whereof is fulfilled by us: but not one mite of good fruit that could as a condition challenge this great work at the hands of the truth of God by virtue of his promise. His truth to his threatening, would have raised up thoughts of destroying men; his truth to his purpose carried on his design of effectually calling them. It is not an engagement of truth to his creature, but of truth to himself.

So that if you ask why he hath called Peter, Paul, and others, since many better conditioned than they have rejected the gospel; the answer is, because he had so purposed in himself; and he is faithful and cannot deny his own counsel, for that were to deny himself, and that eternal idea in his own mind. *He is faithful and cannot deny himself*, 2 Tim. 2. 13, in regard of his purpose, in regard of his absolute promise. Truth to his promise; his promise to his Son, for so Tit. 1. 2, is principally to be understood, *In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began*, there was a donation of some made to Christ, and a donation of grace to Christ for them, deposited in his hands as a treasure to be dispensed to every one of them in their proper time. His truth comes in upon this double donative; a donative of grace to them in Christ before the world began, which would be but as a useless treasure, if not bestowed upon those for whom it was entrusted in his hands; a donative of some according to this purpose to Christ, whose death, and resurrection, and purchase, would be ineffectual, if those thus given, were not in time engrafted in him, and renewed by him, to be made

partakers of all that which he purchased and preserved for them.

Jesus Christ was to have a seed by covenant, a people to be conformed to his image; the issue then of forming a people for his seed, is the effect of God's truth to Christ. And consequent to this antecedent purpose in himself, and promise to Christ, he gives him an order to bring in those that were thus designed to be his sheep, which he calls his sheep, by right of donation, before they were renewed; *My sheep* by right of gift from my Father, mine by right of purchase at my death, mine by right of possession at their effectual call: these I must bring in; not *I may*, but *I must*; and they shall hear my voice. *Other sheep I have: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice*, John 10. 16; not they may; but they shall be inclined to comply with my word and call; Satan and their own lusts shall not hinder them from coming unto me, but they shall be overruled by a powerful spirit; so that there is truth to his purpose, truth to his promise to Christ, truth to the *depositum* in Christ's hands, truth to his word published, that he would give a new heart. So that in whatsoever heart this work is wrought, it is a manifest effect of the truth of God to himself and his Christ. The gift of grace in possession, as a necessary consequent of that gift of it in purpose, before the world began.

4. The *wisdom* of God appears in this work. The secrets of wisdom shine forth in the great concerns of the soul in Christ, who is made wisdom principally to us in our sanctification, as well as righteousness and redemption. Wisdom in the imputation of righteousness, in the draught of sanctification, and in the perfection of it in a complete redemption; wisdom like a thread, runs through every part of the web. The new birth is the great wisdom of the creature; by this he becomes wise, since the scripture entitles all fools without it. The inspiration of this wisdom can

own no other but divine wisdom for the author. It is his own wisdom; for *Who hath been his counsellor?* Rom. 11. 34. He works all things according to the counsel of his own will, freely, wisely; a work of his will, a work of his understanding; *Who works all things according to the counsel of his own will,* Eph. 1. 11; *That we should be to the praise of his glory,* ver. 12; that the glory of the Father may shine out in us. If all things are thus wrought with the choicest counsel, much more the rarest work of God in the world. If all things are wrought with counsel, because he will have a praise from them, much more that from whence he expects to gather the greatest revenue of glory. The bringing us to trust in Christ, is for the praise of his glory; a glory redounds to him, because there is nothing of our own in it, but all his; a farther glory redounds to him, because it is in the wisest manner. It is to the praise and the glory of his goodness in the act of his will: to the praise of the glory of his wisdom in the act of his counsel. There was a mystery of wisdom in the first secretion and singling out this or that person; a revelation of wisdom in the preparations to it, and formation of it. If there be much of his counsel in the minute passages of his providence, in the lowest creatures, which are the subjects of that providence, much more must there be in framing the soul to be a living monument of his glory. It is not a new moulding the outward case of the body, but the inward jewel wrapped up from the view of men: the spirit of the mind, which being more excellent, requires more of skill for the new forming of it.

(1.) The nature of the new birth declares it to be an effect of his wisdom. It is building a divine temple, a spiritual tabernacle, for his own residence; *Ye are God's building,* 1 Cor. 3. 9. Strength will not build a house without art to contrive and proportion the materials; skill is the chief requisite of an architect. The highest pieces of art, come from the most excel-

lent idea in the creature. The beautiful fabric of grace is modelled by the wisest idea in God: that which is glorious in the erection, supposes excellent skill in the contrivance. Every renewed man is *a lively stone*. *Ye also as lively stones, every one of you*, 1 Pet. 2. 5, polished and carved by the wise Creator for an everlasting statue; it is he that hath *wrought us to the self same thing*, 2 Cor. 5. 5, *κατεργασάμεντος*, polished us and curiously wrought us, who were rough stones, covered with the rubbish of sin. As a wise builder, he lays the foundation in sound habits, whereon to raise a superstructure of gracious actions. The counterpart in the heart is no less a fruit of his wisdom, than the law in the tables of stone; wisdom in the first framing the law, wisdom also in the deep imprinting of it. That which enlightens the eyes, and makes wise to salvation, can be entitled to no other original cause than divine wisdom. The soul is a rational work of God.* Surely then that which is the soul of the soul, the glory of the creature, the preparation for happiness, more pleasing to God than the brightest nature, than the natural frame of the highest soul, that which is the pleasure and delight, must be the fruit too of infinite wisdom. Bare effects of power are not the immediate objects of God's special delight.

(2.) The *means* of it declare it to be a fruit of his wisdom. Christ the exemplar hath the treasures of wisdom; grace copied from it, is part of those treasures. The gospel, the instrument, is *the wisdom of God*, as well as *the power of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 7. Divine skill framed the model, reared the building; no less sows the seed in the heart: what did partake of wisdom in the contrivance, progress, all the parts and methods of it, partakes of the same in the inward operations of it upon the soul.

(3.) The *manner* of it speaks it to be so. In re-

* Nyssen *ᾠοῖμα θεολογικόν*.

gard of the enemies he hath to deal with, there must be prudence to countermine the deep and unsearchable plots of the powers of darkness. As there is the strength of sin within, the might of Satan without, as fit subjects for his power; so there are the stratagems of Satan, the subtleties and deceits of the flesh, as a fit occasion for his almighty skill against hellish policy. In regard also of his working upon the soul; he works upon those that are so contrary to his design, without imposing upon their faculties; he moves them according to their physical nature, though contrary to their moral nature: he makes us do willingly, what we would not; he so tunes the strings that they speak out willingly, what naturally they are most unfit for. The Spirit acts wisely in the revealing to us the knowledge of Christ, as *The spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, Eph. 1. 17*; which may note the manner of his acting in the revelation, which is the first work in the soul, as well as the effect it produces; though I suppose the effect is principally meant.

Some question the wisdom of God in acting so upon the will, as not to leave it to its own indifference in this change. What reason is there to question his wisdom? Do not the angels in heaven admire God's wisdom as well as his grace, who hath immutably fixed them to that which is good? Do they question the wisdom of God for so happy a confirmation of them against that indifference which destroyed some of their fellows by creation? But is there not an evident art in this work, to make the will willing, that had no affection to this change? To fit the key so to all the wards, that not one is disordered? To move us contrary to our corrupt reason, yet bring us to that pass to acknowledge we had reason to be so moved? To move our faculties one by another as wheels in a watch? To present spiritual things with such an evident light, as engages our understandings to believe that which they would not believe before, and

our wills to embrace that which our affections gainsay ? It must therefore be a fruit of divine skill, since it is a fruit of *divine teaching*. *John 6. 45.*

(4.) There is a *greater wisdom* in it, than in the creation of the world. The higher the work rises, the more of skill appears. It is a divine art to make man to live the life of plants in his growth ; the life of beasts in his sense ; the life of angels in his mind : more it is then to make him live the life of God in his grace. Man in his body, partakes of earth ; in his soul, of heaven ; in his grace, of the heaven of heavens, of the God of heaven : the grace in the new birth is nearer the likeness of God, than the figure of men in the first birth ; God therefore does more observe the numbers and measures in the *second* creation than he did in the *first*. Man was the most excellent piece in the lower creation ; therefore there is more of art in the framing him, than in the whole celestial and elementary world ; the glorious bodies of sun, moon, and stars, had not such marks upon them : the nearer resemblance any thing has to God, the more of wisdom, as well as power is signified in the make of it.

5. The *holiness* of God is seen in this work. The day of God's power breaks not upon us in the change of our wills, without his appearance in the *beauties of holiness*, *Psa. 110. 3.* The spirit is called a spirit of holiness, not only as he is the efficient, but as he is the pattern, and like fire transforms into his own nature ; for *that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit*. The law in the tables of stone was an image ; the law in the heart is an extract of God's holiness. Our first creation in a mutable state, was according to his *own image*, *Gen. 1. 26.* Our second creation is more exactly like him in a gracious immutability. The holiness in Christ's human nature was an effect of the holiness of God ; the holiness we have then in resemblance to Christ, must be a fruit of the same perfection.

If we are renewed according to his image, it must be according to his holiness. To be merciful and just, is to have a moral image ; to be holy, is to have a divine : the apostle intimates this in his exhortation, we must be holy in serving him, because he was holy in calling us ; *As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy,* &c. 1 Pet. 1. 15. In this respect, God calls himself, not only a Holy One, but the Holy One of Israel ; *I am the Lord your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your king,* Isa. 43. 15. He is not only holy in himself, but displays his holiness in them, by an act of a new creation. By Creator, is not meant, his being the Creator of them, as he is of all, even of wicked men, and devils ; but implies a peculiar relation to them, as distinguished from others. He is the Creator of devils, holy in his actions towards devils, but not their Holy One by any inward renovation, or consecrating them to himself, as he is the Holy One of Israel.

As he is a God in covenant, he is our God, therefore our God, as he is a holy God, as well as he is a powerful God, communicating the one as well as the other in a covenant way : therefore the prophet Habakkuk joins them both together, *O Lord, my God, my Holy One,* Hab. 1. 12. His holiness is no less necessary for the felicity of his people, than his mercy and power. What happiness could his mercy move, his wisdom contrive, or his power effect, without the communication of his holiness ? Mercy could not of itself fit a man for it, nor power give a man possession of it, without holiness, attiring him with all those graces which prepare him for it. God, as sovereign, chose us ; as merciful, pardons us ; as wise, guides us ; as powerful, protects us ; as true, makes good his promises to us ; but as holy, cleanses us from our old habits, makes us vessels of honour, filled with the savoury and delicious fruits of his Spirit, his pleasant things. The implantation of grace in the heart, is no less an effect of his holiness than

the preservation of it is; which our Saviour intimates, when in his petition for it, he gives his Father rather the title of Holy, than of any other attribute; *Holy Father, keep through thy own name, John 17. 11.*

6. The power of God appears in this work. *Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind, John 9. 32;* neither was it ever heard that any man could open the understanding of one that was born dark. Every thing that pertains to life and godliness, of which regeneration is not the meanest, is the work of divine power; *According as his divine power hath given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who hath called us to glory and virtue, 2 Pet. 1. 3;* glory and virtue by a *Hendiadis*, for a glorious virtue: and the apostle adds, that this calling was an effect of a glorious power; it is not *εἰς*, but *διὰ*, *through* glory and virtue; the same preposition *διὰ*, which was joined with knowledge, is translated *through*; as much as to say, through a glorious virtue or power; both *ἀρετή* and *virtus*, signifying valour and strength in their several languages. When God hardens a man, he only withdraws his grace. But a divine virtue is necessary for the cure of our hereditary disease. There is no great force required to cut a dead man; but to raise him, requires an extraordinary power.

We may as well deny this work to be a new creation, a resurrection, as deny it to be an act of divine power. There is a word that calls; there is also a power to work; *Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, 1 Thes. 1. 5;* that is, the power of the Holy Ghost. There was not only grace in the word, to woo, but the power of the Holy Ghost in it, to overcome the heart. There is not only an act of an almighty Spirit, but an act of his almightiness. The hand of the Lord created the world, *the heavens are the work of his fingers, Psal. 8. 3;* but grace is the

work of *his arms*, *Isa.* 53. 1. It may be said of the first grace in the new birth, as it was of Reuben, It is his *might*, the *beginning of his strength*, and the *excellency of his power*, *Gen.* 49. 3. Though ministerial gifts were as excellent as Paul's, whose preaching was with demonstration and power, and who knew the readiest way to men's hearts, if a man ever did; yet the *excellency of the power was of God*: and when he brandished his spiritual weapons, they were only *mighty through God*, *2 Cor.* 10. 4. Though the declaration was his, yet the working was Christ's, *Rom.* 15. 18: none of his people are willing, till the *day of his power*, *Psal.* 110. 3.

1. It is as *great*, yea, *greater* power, than that put forth in creation. It is as great; it is the introduction of another form, not in a way of any action or fashion, but in such a manner as was in the creation; that is, by the mighty operation of God; otherwise it could not be called a new creature, though it might be called a new thing. You call not that which is made by the art or power of man, as a watch, a clock, a house, a new creature; for there is nothing of creation in them, but art and industry, setting the pieces of matter, created to their hands, together in such a form or figure. But this is called a new creature, not so much in regard of the newness of the thing, but in regard of the power that wrought it, and the manner of working it, being the same with that of creation. * And being termed so, it implies the exerting an efficacious power: for creation is not wrought by a cessation of action, which would be in God, if the will were only the cause of it, but the employment of an active virtue: God does not hold his hand in his bosom, but spreads it open, and applies it to an efficacious action: since it is a new creation, it implies a Creator, and a creative power; creation cannot be without both. It is a greater power expended in

* Amirant, Serm. sur 2 Phil. 13. p. 20.

regeneration, than in creation; more power morally in this, than physically in that; one word created the world; many words are combined for the new preparation of the heart. It is easier to make a thousand glasses, than to set together one that is dashed in pieces. It is easier with God to make a world, (*quoad nos*, as to our conception, for all things are alike easy with God) and create thousands of men with his image, as bright as Adam's, than to bring that into form which is so miserably defaced.

The exceeding greatness of this power must be considered in regard of the *subject*. Sin hath turned man into a beast; and omnipotency only can turn a bestial man into angelical and divine. There is a less distance between the least particle of dust and the glorious God, than there is between the holy God and an impure sinner; sin and grace are more contrary to one another, than *aliquid* and *nihil*, something and nothing. A straw may with less power be made a star, than a corrupted sinner be made a saint. In creation God was only to put in nature, here he is to put off one that is strong, and to bring in another altogether strange and new; it is hard to bring a man off from his old stock, and as hard to make him nakedly to trust Christ: it is more difficult to make a man leave his sin, than to change his opinion, since men are more in love with habitual wickedness, than with any opinion whatsoever. In regard of the indisposedness of the soul. There is some foundation for a natural religion, there being general notions of God and his attributes, which would administer some conclusions that he was to be feared and revered; and according to these notions many checks of conscience, which would induce men to some moral behaviour towards God: but in the setting our hearts right to God, and creating them in a Mediator, there was not the least dust in nature to build upon.

In the creating Adam's body, there was some pre-existent matter; the dust of the ground, whereof his

body was by a divine power made and organized ; but we meet with no pre-existent matter for the formation of the soul, which made him a rational creature ; that indeed was the breath of God, not engendered by any concurring cause in nature : there is no pre-existent matter in the creature, of which this image is formed, though there be a pre-existent subject to receive the impression of it ; it is not rearing any thing upon the foundation of nature ; but introducing a nature wholly new, which speaks almightiness. In regard of the contradiction in the subject. The stream of man's natural reason, the principles of self, whereby he is guided, run counter to it : there is a pride of reason which will not stoop to the gospel, which in man's wisdom is counted foolishness.

Man is an untamed heifer, a wild ass that snuffs up the wind, full of hatred to the ways of God, guided by gigantic lusts, which make as great a resistance as a mountain of brass ; stoutness of heart, strong prejudices against the law of God ; fierceness of affection, drinking iniquity like water ; universal madness, resisting the Spirit, wild imaginations ; frowardness in the will, forwardness to evil, perversity against good : Can any thing, less than an almighty power, make an universal change ? It is more easy to make men stoop to some victorious prince, and become his vassals, than to bring men to a submission to God and his laws, which they entertain with contempt and scorn. Nothing obeyed God's word in the creation ; though it contributed not to his design, yet it could not oppose him ; it could not swell against him, because it was nothing. But every sinner is rebellious, disputes God's commands, fortifies himself against his entrance, gives not up himself without a contest. This pride is hereditary, it bore sway in the heart ever since Adam's fall, and hath prescription of as long a standing as the world, to plead for possession.

What, but infinite power, can bring down this pride at the foot of the cross, make the heart strike its swelling sail to Christ, and become nothing in itself, that Christ may be all life in him, and all righteousness to him? It is only possible to God to make a camel pass through a needle's eye : no less than divine power can bring down these armies of opposite imaginations, which have both multitude and strength, (and no man knows either their number or strength,) and the whole frame of contradiction against the grace of Christ. Our Saviour intimates this creative power in that thanksgiving to his Father; *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, &c. Matt. 11. 25.* Christ, in all his addresses to his Father, used attributes and titles suitable to the business he insisted on. The revelation of divine knowledge to babes, the moulding their hearts to receive it, was an act of God as he is Lord of heaven and earth, putting forth an infinite power in the forming of it. If God were the author of grace in the hearts of those babes, persons better disposed, and nearer the kingdom of heaven, as he was Lord of heaven and earth; then there must be some greater power than that of the creation of the world, put forth to conquer the wise and prudent, whose wisdom and prudence stands armed in the breaches of nature to beat off the assaults of the gospel.

We see the exceeding greatness of the regenerating power of God in the opposition of the present *possessors*. The chasing out an armed devil that hath kept the palace in peace so long, must be by *a power superior to his own, Luke 11. 21, 22.* This great Goliath hath his armour about him, hath had long possession and dearest affections : the impulses of natural concupiscence take his part: he hath his alluring baits, his pleasing proposals : the world and the flesh are united with him in a league, to hinder the restoration of the soul to Christ, and the restoration of God's image to the soul. A threefold cord is not easily broken. It

must be a power superior to those three great powers in conjunction, that must bind the strong man : and *casting him out, and spoiling his goods are acts of power, Matt. 12. 29.* Satan is too strong to be easily cast out, and the flesh loves him too dearly to be easily divorced from him ; he is never like to lay down his arms by persuasions ; though all the angels in heaven should intreat him, he would not give up one foot of his empire. Nay, though what God proposes hath a greater weight of goodness, pleasure, and profit in itself, than what those three great impostors can offer, yet since reason is weak and mightily corrupted under the conduct of sense, which hath an alliance with Satan's proposals, and first receives them, it is not like to meet with any entertainment, as being against the interest of the flesh ; and the will being backed with two such powerful seconds, as Satan and the world, to assist it in its refusals.

Indeed, if he that is in the regenerate, were not greater and more powerful than he that is in the world, they would not be able to resist his allurements and subtleties, 1 *John* 4. 4. The triumphs of Christ at his ascension declare his power in his acquisition ; with a strong hand he broke the chain of sinners, and led captivity captive before he gave gifts to men, *Psa.* 61. 18. He does the like in giving grace to the heart : he *rides upon his white horse* in the power of almighty grace, when he conquers the enmity in the soul, as well as when he *overcomes the enemies of his church*, *Rev.* 6. 2.

2. It is a power as great as that which wrought in the *resurrection of Christ*. It is considerable how loftily the apostle sets it out ; *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power : Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, Eph. 1. 19, 20.* Exceeding greatness of his power, *ὑπεράλλον*, with an hyperbole, according to the

working or efficaciousness of his mighty power, noting the infusion of faith in the soul by a powerful impression; *According to the working of the might or strength*; one word was not enough to signify the great power working: it is strength with a greater edge upon it; as when a man would fetch a mighty blow, he stirs up all his strength, sets his teeth an edge to summon all his spirits to assist his arm.

The power of God in creation of nature is never in the whole scripture set forth so magnificently as his power in the creation of grace is in this place. The apostle selects not any examples of God's power in his ordinary works, or that power in lesser miracles which exceeded the power of nature, to illustrate this power by. He does not say, it is that power whereby we work miracles, or speak with tongues: no; neither is it that power whereby our Saviour wrought such miracles when he was in the world. It is a more illustrious power than the giving sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, yea, or life to a putrified carcase; this is an extraordinary power: but yet this gracious power is higher than all this; for it is as great as that which wrought the two greatest miracles that ever were acted in the creation, as great as the raising Jesus Christ, perfectly dead in the grave, and having the weight of the sin of the world upon him; and as great as that power, which after the raising of him, set him in his human nature at his right hand, above principalities and powers, above the whole angelical state: as much as to say, as great as all that power which wrought the whole scene of the redemption, from the foundation-stone to the top-stone. It is such an unconquerable power, whereby God brings about all his decrees which terminated in Christ.

Some say, this power is not exercised in the begetting faith, but in the faithful after faith is begun. It is very strange that a less power is necessary to beget, than to preserve a thing after it is brought into being.

And the same power is requisite to raise the heart of the most moral man under heaven out of the grave of corrupted nature, as well as those that are furthest in their dispositions from God. As, had not our Saviour had the weight of the sins of men upon him, had he been dead but an hour or two, lain in the grave with a little loose earth, or light sand cast upon him; it would have required infinite power to have restored him to life. The apostle mentions this in other places, though not so highly as in this; *That like as Christ was raised up by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life, Rom. 6. 4.* It must be understood thus, Even so we, being raised up from sin by the glory of the father, should walk in newness of life. And it may be partly the meaning of the apostle Peter, *Who hath begotten us again to a lively hope by, or through, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1 Pet. 1. 3;* not only as the foundation of our hopes, but by a power conformable to that which raised Christ from the dead.

I would only by the way note, that this infers a higher operation than merely an exhortation and persuasion: for would any man say of a philosopher that had taught him morality, that he had displayed in him the exceeding greatness of his power, only upon the account of advising and counselling him to reform his manners, and live more soberly and honestly in the world? Our Saviour esteemed this one thing greater than all the other miracles he wrought, and declared himself to be the Christ more by this than by any other. When John sent to know who he was, he returns no other account, than the list of his miracles; *The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached, Luke 7. 20.* That which brings up the rear, as the greatest, is, the poor *εὐαγγελίζονται*, are evangelized; it is not to be taken actively of the preaching of the gospel, but passively that they were wrought upon by the gospel, and became an evangelized people,

transformed into the mould of it, else it would bear no analogy to the other miracles ; the deaf hear, and the dead were raised ; they had not exhortations to hear and live, but the effects were wrought in them ; so those words import not only the preaching of the gospel to them, but the powerful operation of the gospel in them. This greatest miracle in the catalogue, is the only miracle our Saviour has left in the world since the cessation of all the rest.

I have insisted the longer upon these perfections in God apparent in this work :

1. To stir up every renewed person to a *thankful* frame toward God: that he should engage his choicest attributes for the good of a poor creature. To what purpose did the apostle so long and so highly speak of the power of God in raising them from a spiritual death, but that they should acknowledge it, and admire God for it? It cannot but raise high admirations and adorations of God, to consider how mercy moved for them, sovereignty called them out, wisdom modelled them, holiness cleansed them, and power framed them.

2. To stir up deep *humility*. It is a plain declaration of our miserable estate by nature, and the difficulty of emerging out of it ; impossible for any creature to effect. Had not God been infinitely merciful, wise, holy, true, and omnipotent, and put forth his power to free men from a slavery to sin, not a man had been able to escape out of it ; and these two, admiration of God, and humiliation of self, are the two great acts of a christian, which set all other graces on work. Mercy speaks us very miserable ; wisdom declares us fools ; holiness, unclean ; and power, extremely weak.

3. How mightily will it give a ground to the *exercise* of faith? He that is deeply sensible of this work of holiness and power in him, cannot but trust God upon his deed, as well as before he did upon his word. As you go to the promises without you, consider also

the counter part of the promise within you, and the efficacy of that power which wrought it ; you have a ground of faith within you ; the power extends to every one wherein this work is wrought : *What is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe* ; this the apostle speaks to all the believing Ephesians.

4. Therefore look much into yourselves by way of *examination*, to *observe* the actings of God's wisdom, holiness, and power, within you. The want of this makes many gracious persons live disconsolately. Paul was certainly diligent in his observation, since he speaks so feelingly and experimentally of it. It is the way to answer Satan's objections, silence unbelieving thoughts, when you can trace the steps and operations of them in you ; it would make you strive for an increase of this work of regeneration, that you may feel in yourselves more evidences of the holiness and power of God.

5. Those that want it, may well *despair* of attaining it by themselves and *their own* strength. Divine wisdom and power are exerted in this work, and men may as well think themselves able to raise a dead man ; yea, Christ from the grave, and set him at the right hand of God, as do this by their own strength ; if we want an eye or a hand, all the creation cannot furnish us with either. How can any power but that which is infinite, give us an eye to look to Christ within the veil, and capacity to enjoy him in heaven ?

6. It directs men where to seek it, and *to seek it earnestly*. At the hands of God ; since infinite wisdom, holiness, and power, are necessary for the production of it. With earnestness, because it is so transcendent a work, hath so many perfections of God shining in it, that creature strength and wisdom is utterly unable to frame and raise it ; and with hopes too, if they earnestly seek it, since God hath hereby declared himself infinitely loving in the combination

of so many attributes for the effecting of it. Plead therefore the glory of God in these his attributes ; and if God give you a heart to seek it, it is a probable argument he will give you that grace, which he hath given you a heart to desire.

PART III.

HOW THE WORK OF REGENERATION IS EFFECTED.

Regeneration a secret work—Rational—It is a work upon the understanding--Removes prejudice--Brings the mind and object together—Fixes the mind upon the object—Reasoning upon the sight of evidence—Full conviction of the soul—The Spirit of God works upon the will of man—This work immediate and supernatural—How the scriptures describe this work—The will corrupted—The soul endowed with all divine principles—State of infants—Regeneration must include the operation of the Spirit upon the will—Not a compulsive work—It is free and gentle—Insuperably victorious.

IV. Quest. **HOW** God doth this?

1. This work is *secret*, and therefore *difficult* to be described. The effects are as obvious to a spiritual sense, as the methods of it obscure to our understandings; secret as the original of winds, sensible as the sound and bluster of them, *John* 3. 8. If a dead man were raised, he would not know the manner how his soul returned into the body, how it took its former place, and made up a new union; yet he would know that he lives and moves. A gracious soul knows that he was carnal, and now spiritual; blind, and that he now sees: he finds strength instead of weakness; inclinations to good, instead of opposi-

tion ; sweetness in the ways of God, instead of bitterness. The methods of grace are obscure, as those of nature ; *Who knows the way of the spirit, or how the bones grow in the womb of her that is with child ? even so thou knowest not the works of God who makes all, Eccles. 11. 5.* The manner of the formation of Christ in the soul, is as undiscernable as the formation of a child, or the manner of Christ's conception ; both which are fearful and wonderful, as it is said of the first, *Psa. 139. 14. Who can declare his generation ? Isa. 53. 8 ;* that is, the generation of Christ, either in his person, or in his people.

We cannot give a satisfactory account of the natural motions of our souls, how one faculty commands another, how the soul governs the several parts of the body ; what the nature of the action of our mind is in contemplation and reflection ; how our wills move the spirits in the body, whereby the members are acted in their motion, and the functions of life performed : much more undiscernable are the supernatural methods of the Spirit of God. We know ourselves heirs to the corruption of the first Adam, by the inbeing of it ; the light of the grace of the second Adam discovers itself in the soul ; but the manner of the descent of either is not easily to be determined. The loadstone's attracting iron is the best representation of this work ; the soul, like that, moves sensibly, cleaves strongly to God ; but wherein this virtue consists, how communicated both in that of nature, and this of spirit, dazzles the eye of reason.

2. Yet this is evident, that it is *rational* ; that is, *congruous to the essential nature of man.* * God does not deal with us as beasts, or as creatures destitute of sense, but as creatures of an intelligent order. Who is there that believes in Christ in such a manner, as heavy things fall to the earth, or light things fly up to the air, or as beasts run at the

beck of their sensual appetite, without rule or reason? If the Spirit of God wrought so upon man, this were to lay our faculties asleep, not to act them, but to act only upon them; this were to invert the natural order by creation, to raze out the foundations of virtue, and deny the creature the pleasure of his condition, who according to such a manner of operation, could not understand his own state, no more than a brute can the harmony of music, or the pleasing variety of colours.

But grace perfects our souls, possesses them with new principles, moves one faculty by another, like the motions of the wheels in a clock or watch; like the common course of providence, wherein he orders all affairs according to the dependence of them one upon another by creation, without making any inroad upon the natural rights of any creature, but preserving them entire, unless in some miraculous action. He diffuses a supernatural virtue into the soul, not to thwart it in that course of working he appointed it in the creation, but to move it agreeably to its nature as a rational being. As the sun conveys a celestial virtue upon the plants, drawing them forth by its influence according to their several natures; so the Holy Ghost introduces a supernatural principle into men, whereby they act as reasonable creatures in a higher strain.

What methods our Saviour used in the first declaration of the gospel, he uses in the propagation of it in the hearts of men. The same reason that is used in writing the indenture, is used in writing the counterpart. He might by his omniscient wisdom have found the way to the secretest corner of every man's heart, and by his power have set up what standard he pleased in every part of the castle, without proposing the gospel in the way of miracles and arguments; but he transacts all that affair in such a manner, that men might be moved in a rational way to their own happiness. He required a rational be-

lief, as he gave rational evidences; *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not, John 10. 37*; that is, the works that none but one empowered by God could do. God that requires of us a reasonable service, would work upon us by a reasonable operation. God therefore works by way of a spiritual illumination of the understanding, in propounding the creature's happiness by arguments and reasons, and in a way of a spiritual impression upon the will, moving it sweetly to the embracing that happiness, and the means to it which he proposes; and indeed without this work preceding, the motion of the will could never be regular.

God does this by a double work. 1. Upon the understanding. 2. Upon the will.

(1.) Upon the *understanding*. The opening the eyes precedes the conversion from darkness to light, in God's operation, as well as in the apostle's commission, *Acts 26. 18*. The first appearance of life when God raiseth the soul, is in the *clearness and distinctness of its knowledge of God, Hos. 6. 2, 3*. And the apostle in his exhortation to the Romans, tells them, the way for the transformation of their souls, was by the renewing of their minds: *Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds, Rom. 12. 2*. The light of the sun is seen breaking out at the dawning of the day, before the heat of the sun be felt. As the action of our sense is to sensible objects, so is that of our soul to spiritual; our eye first sees an object, before our hearts desire it, or our members move to it; so there is an apprehension of the goodness of the thing proposed, before there be any motion of our wills to it. So God begins his work in our minds, and terminates it in our wills. In regard of this, as a state of nature is set forth under the term of *darkness*, so a state of grace is often termed *light*, that being the first work in the new creation, as it was the first word of command in the old, *Let there be light, 2 Cor. 4. 6. Col. 3. 10*, and is therefore

called a *renewing in knowledge*, or unto knowledge or acknowledgment, ἀνακαινεμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν.

If you consider the scripture, you will find most of the terms whereby this is set forth to us, have relation to the understanding. The gospel itself is called *knowledge*, *Luke* 1. 77; *wisdom*, *1 Cor.* 1. 30. What faculty in man is appointed for the apprehending of a science to gain wisdom, but the understanding? That whereby we receive the gospel is called *the spirit of the mind, the eyes of the understanding, and sight*, which is put before believing. *Every one which sees the Son, and believes on him*, *John* 6. 40. The work of grace is called *revelation*, *Gal.* 1. 16, *illumination*, *Eph.* 1. 18; *Translation from darkness to light; opening the heart*; the action of our minds being enlightened, is called *comprehending*, *Eph.* 3. 18, and *knowledge*, *2 Pet.* 1. 2. All respect the understanding, as the original wheel which God primarily sets in order,* from whence he influences *secondarily* all the other faculties which depend upon its guidance, God preserving hereby the order which he instituted in nature; therefore when the understanding savingly apprehends the deformity of sin, the will must needs hate it; when it apprehends the mercy of God, and the beauty of holiness, the will must needs love him; and the higher the degrees of this saving illumination are in the mind, the stronger and firmer are the habits and acts of grace in the will.

This illuminative act of the Spirit, is before, *prior natura*, the other of inclining the will; for the understanding is first exercised about the word, as *verum*, true, before the will is concerned in it as good. The understanding takes in the light of the gospel, which by the working of the Spirit is reflected upon the will, whereby it is changed into the image of Christ whose gospel it is. *Beholding us in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image*, *2 Cor.* 3.

* Testard de natura, &c. Thes. 233, 234.

18. The first act is of the mind, which is the eye of the soul ; where the apostle intimates, that the whole progress, as well as the first change, is wrought in this manner.

This is wrought,

1. By removing the *indisposition and prejudices* which naturally are in the mind. As a wise physician which orders his medicines for the removing of the principal humour. Chains of darkness must be broken, films upon the eye must be removed, which hinder the act of vision : for what the eye is to the body, that the understanding is to the soul. The darkness of ignorance is promised in the covenant to be scattered ; *They shall all know me from the least to the greatest of them, Jer. 31. 34.* This being a law in the inward parts, the eye must be cleared to read it as well as the heart cleansed to obey it. The object being spiritual, requires a spiritual disposition in the faculty for the reception of it. This is called in scripture a *giving eyes to see, and ears to hear, Deut. 29. 4,* and the revealing things not only by the word, but by the Spirit, *1 Cor. 2. 10,* which in regard of rectifying the reasons and judgments of men, is called a *spirit of judgment ; And shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of burning, Isa. 4. 4 ;* a spirit of judgment, as it is light in the understanding, removing the darkness ; a spirit of burning, as it is heat in the heart, thawing the hardness.

It reduces the mind into a right order, and teaches it to judge between truth and falshood, between good and evil ; the want of which is the cause of sin, whence sins are called *αἰσθηματα, Heb. 9. 7, errors,* as arising from error in judgment. Since the mind is filled with fogs, and incapable to perceive the splendour of divine truths, God acts upon the mind by an inward virtue, causing the word proposed, to be mixed with an act of faith, which he begets in the soul, whereby

it apprehends the excellency of that state presented to it in the gospel. As there is a manifestation of his name in the word, so there is an operation of his grace; an internal teaching by God, as well as an external by the gospel; the proposal of the word by man, the opening and fitting the heart by God. *Every man that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, comes unto me, John 6. 45.* Christ taught all by his ministry, the Father only some by his Spirit. Learning of God goes before coming to Christ; and those two acts are plainly distinguished: *Hear and not understand, Isa. 6. 9, 10;* the lock of their minds was to be opened, as well as that of their ears; the prophet's voice could unlock the one, the Spirit only had the key of the other. Men may enlighten as moral causes, God only as the efficient cause, to root out the inward indisposition.

The Spirit also removes the prejudices against Christ as undesirable, against holiness as troublesome; takes down the strength of corrupt reasonings, pulls down those idols in the mind, and false notions of happiness; out-reasons men out of their inward thoughts of a happiness in sensual pleasures, pride of life, mammon of honour or wealth, which are the root of our spiritual disease, and first to be cured. In this there is a manifest difference between the working of Satan, and the operation of God; he sets his battery against the affections, because the entry is there easiest; God breaks in upon the understanding, which being the chief fort, will quickly be a means to reduce the lesser citadels. And when the work begins in removing the blindness, it is the way to a true conversion; when it begins only in the affections, it is a prognostic of a quick starting aside. In an outward exhortation, God acts suitably to our nature, since we are endued with understanding and will; but in acting upon us within, he does remedy the vice of our nature; since our reason and will are corrupted.

2. It is wrought by bringing the mind and the ob-

ject *close together*. * Sight is produced in a blind man by drawing off the scales from his eyes, and the recourse of spirits to the eye necessary for sight; besides this, there must be outward light, and objects coloured by that light; and from the eye so disposed within, and the thing discovered without, arises the action of sight; so from the preparation of the understanding, and the application of the object, arises this action of spiritual vision. There is a double opening, one of the gospel, the other of the understanding; the Saviour did both, he *opened the scriptures*, Luke 4. 32, and opened their understandings, ver. 45, that there might be a mutual entrance, that the word might dwell in their hearts, and their hearts have admission into the word. The Spirit shows the great things of the gospel to the soul; ἀπαγγελεῖ, *He shall receive of mine, and show it unto you*, John 16. 14; not in general, but bring them near to them, to make them view, and know the things that are freely given to them of God, 1 Cor. 2. 12, the benefits of the death and resurrection of Christ; he repeats them again and again, that there may be an evidence in the mind that they are the royal gifts of God.

There is a knowledge before this work of the Spirit, but as of things at a distance; many know the things proposed in the gospel, but they know it not as a glorious gospel, nor see the wonders in this law, till the Spirit brings that and the faculty close together. As a man may discern a statue or picture at a distance, but till the eye and the objects meet closer together, it cannot discern the beautiful workmanship upon them, with any affection to them. Not that a man knew nothing, or knows new reasons of those things which he knew before; but there is a nearer, and therefore clearer representation of them, which is *demonstratio ostensiva*, whereby he knows them in another manner than he did before. As a man may

know the promises before, but they were not brought so near to him as to taste them ; taste being an addition to knowledge, whereby a man knows that sensibly, which before he only knew notionally. It is one thing to know a mechanical instrument, and another to know it in the operation of it, when it is applied to its proper use. It is like a man that hath his understanding more cleared by seeing mathematical demonstrations, and lines drawn, than by all the rules of art in his head.

3. By *fixing* the mind upon the object so closely presented. The Spirit settles that light and the object so in the mind, that it can no more blow it out, than puff out the sparklings of a diamond, or than an artist endued with the habit of some art, can divest himself of his skill. Many men have some convictions of truth, but flashy and uncertain, and which slip from their minds : but when the Spirit opens the heart, it holds the object to the mind, and the mind to the object ; starts one holy thought after another about the truth it hath darted in, makes the mind peer about it, and take notice of every lineament of that truth that we eye, and those thoughts lie down, rise up, and walk with us. When *Lydia's heart was opened, she attended to the things spoken by Paul, Acts 16. 14,* her whole heart cleaved to them.

In this respect the Spirit is a *remembrancer*, making the soul ponder, and beat over again with all intenseness of mind, the goodness and truth of those things in the gospel which are brought unto it ; that the heart is, as Paul was, *bound in spirit to Jerusalem, Acts 20. 22.* The thoughts of that journey did so haunt him, and follow him, as the shadow does the body, that no arguments of friends, nor fear of danger, could divert him ; the soul is bound by them, one consideration overtaking another, and all at work beating upon the mind. Hence consideration is put before conversion ; *Because he considers and turns away from all his transgressions, Ezek. 18. 28.* And

it is called the *ingrafted word*, fastened to the soul as a graft to the stock; when the heart is opened by the Spirit, the word is inserted in, and bound to it, and at last the heart becomes one with the word, and grows up with it.

4. By bringing the soul to an *actual reasoning* and discourse upon the *sight of the evidence*. God convinces the judgment with reasons proper to evidence the truth and goodness of what he proposes, and that with pregnant and prevailing demonstrations, which give a competent satisfaction; therefore called the *demonstration of the Spirit and power*, 1 Cor. 2. 4; that is, a spiritual and powerful demonstration. When the eye is opened, and the revelation made, and held close and fast to the soul with a divine demonstration, that this is the only means to elevate him to a high condition, and at last bring him to a blessed immortality; the understanding is moved to compare the force of those arguments, and consequently judgeth that true which before it counted false and foolishness; and comes by the help of this spiritual light to reason spiritually, and spiritually to discern the proposition made to it.

It compares its natural state with the happy state offered to it; its own ignorance with that light, its own misery with that mercy. God will not have man, that is so far above a beast, do any thing without reason; for this would be to do it brutishly, though the thing done were never so good: when men act as men, they follow the judgment of the best reason they can; and shall man that was created a rational creature, be renewed without reason, when the very work is to advance him to the true state of a reasonable creature, and his reason is enlightened by the Spirit, that it may rightly judge of the demonstrative arguments it offers to him? Is there not as much reason for the guidance of the will in the highest concern, as for the conduct of it in affairs of a lower sphere? Man was first endued with reason, that he

might rationally serve God, and his depraved reason is reformed, that he may rationally return to God. If therefore he act like a man in other things, he does not surely act like a brute in this; but the Spirit excites that reason he hath enlightened, to judge of those excellent things he proposes, and the strength of the arguments he backs them with, which are so clear and undeniable, that they cannot be refused by a mind divested of those indispositions which drew out before a contempt of them.

The change in the will being an election and choice, cannot be made without convincing and satisfying reasons which induce it to that choice, and justify the election it hath made; * that can hardly be called faith, when a man believes that which he does not think upon the highest reason was his duty to believe. And indeed what man is there that cannot alledge some reason why he is induced to this or that act? God moves men by presenting things to the understanding, under the notion of good, honest, profitable; and when the understanding is enlightened to judge of things in some measure under the same notion that God proposeth them, a man's own reason cannot but, upon a view of them, assent unto them; and that assent is followed with a change, according to the degrees of that illumination, if it be a saving one. Upon this account that our own reason is excited to judge of the proposal, our faith can no more be said to be a human faith, or the work to proceed from our own power, than it can be said to be sensitive, because it comes by hearing: for though faith depends upon hearing and reasoning, as upon natural powers; yet the light whereby the faculties are acted, is wholly supernatural, and from the Spirit of God.

(5.) Hence follows a *full conviction* of the soul. Both the knowledge of its own misery, and the amiableness of the gospel offer, whence issues a wear-

* Stillingfleet.

ness under the one, and desires for the other. By this enlightening, the soul sees sin in its empire, God in his wrath, Satan in his tyranny, and the hardness of the stone within him: he sees the law accusing, sin triumphing, heaven shut, and hell open, God ready to judge him, and his soul every way deplorable. He sees also in the gospel how Christ hath expiated sin, answered the demands of the law, stills the clamours of conscience, satisfied the justice of God by bearing his wrath; hereupon the soul closes with Christ, and is born again. Here are heaps of sin that cannot be numbered; on the other side are riches of mercy that cannot be reckoned; there is sin to damn, here is a Christ to save; heaven and hell, sin and Christ, damnation and salvation, are presented in their proper colours, and pressed upon the understanding, which beholds all by a clear light. And thus by the illuminative virtue of the Spirit, the soul is laid at God's foot in a sense of its misery; and then drawn into Christ's arms by a sense of his grace. This is wrought by a *convictive persuasion*, for so the word ἐλέγχειν signifies, *John* 16. 8; which causes both a sight of sin, and a sense of righteousness, and produces a full assent in the understanding.

(2.) The next faculty wrought upon, is the *will*. The will is inclined as well as the understanding enlightened, whereby spiritual things are approved with a spiritual affection; the same hand that darts light into the mind, puts heat into the will. After the act of understanding hath preceded in a serious consideration, and through conviction, the act of the will by virtue of the same Spirit, follows in a delightful motion to the object proposed to it; it is conducted by light, and spirited by love; the understanding hands the object to the will as necessary to be embraced; and the arms of the will are open to receive it, as the eyes of the mind are to behold it.

For the understanding of this, take these propositions.

Prop. I. There seems to me to be an *immediate supernatural* work upon the will, as well as upon the understanding; not that the understanding is only enlightened, and the will follows the dictate of that, without any further touch of the Spirit upon it; but the will as it is the will, and therefore cannot be forced, there is need of a moral cause which may determine it according to its nature, and draw it by the cords of a man. When a man instructs a youth in his trade, he does it by arguments, morally; when he holds his hand with the instrument in it, and directs the motion, he acts physically; so does the Spirit exhort us to spiritual motion, telling us inwardly which is the way, that we may walk in it, and take our wills by the hand, as it were, and lead them in the way they are to go. A nurse's tongue and exhortation is not enough to make a child to go, because of the weakness of its limbs; nor light in the understanding sufficient to move the will, wherein there is an habitual weakness and contradiction.

* How did God work upon the wills of the *Egyptians to lend their jewels to the Israelites*, but by some immediate touch. Their reason might have furnished them with many more arguments against it, than it could for it; they knew the Israelites had been highly injured, and that very lately too; that they could not but have a deep sense of their oppression, and intentions of revenge, as far as their power extended. They knew that the Israelites prepared for flight, and might more than conjecture that they intended never to return or send their jewels to them; for what need had they of so many goods barely to sacrifice in the wilderness? How were their wills thus bended against so many arguments against this action, and without any strong reasons to move them to consent to such a desire of the Israelites? How must this be, but by the efficacious power of God not forcing

* Ducat. de Imag. Dei. lib. 2. c. 4. p. 32.

their wills, but taming their fierceness, softening them by a secret instinct, and exciting them to a grant of the Israelites' request.

The apostle saith, God gives to will. If there were not a particular act upon the will, it had better been said, God gives to understand and know, and man to will and do. After the evidence set up in the understanding, there is a secret touch upon the will, opening and enlarging it to run the way that is proposed in an excellent and charming manner. As the power of God raised every part of Christ, so the same power raises every faculty of the soul: it was also a physical power, since mere exhortation would never have effected it.

(1.) The scripture intimates this in the terms whereby it signifies this work to us; as *creation, resurrection, regeneration, new birth*, all which denote some physical operation distinct in each faculty in the new creation, as there was in the first; not only the law in the mind to direct, but the heart of flesh to comply, is God's act. The fleshy heart is wrought by him, as well as the knowledge of the mind lighted by him. In generation something is removed, another thing is introduced; in regeneration then of the will, there is consonant to that, an eradication of corrupt habits, and an implantation of gracious ones. It is called a *giving a heart, a circumcision of the heart to love God, Deut. 10. 6*. Love is an act of the will, though it supposes a knowledge of the amiable object in the understanding. If faith be principally in the will, as I think it is, as to consent; and the words *leaning, resting, coming*, rather note an act of the will, than an act of the understanding; there is then an operation of God upon the subject, viz. the *will*, in the implanting of it.

(2.) The will is corrupted as well as the understanding. The works of the flesh issue from both; if the corruption were only in the understanding, then that being removed, the will would be regenerated.

As in a watch, if the fault be only in one wheel, that being mended, the whole frame is rectified ; but if there be a flaw in all, the mending of one, though the principal one, which moves the rest, will not set every wheel right, without a particular application of art to restore them to their due frame. Was not original righteousness subjectively in the will, as well as in the mind ? Did not a stoutness in the will succeed in the place of that righteousness, as well as darkness in the place of light ? Must not there then be a habit of mollifying grace bestowed upon the one, as well as a habit of enlightening truth set up in the other ; an inclination to good in the will, and an aversion from evil, as well as the knowledge of both ? The corrupt proneness in the will, is the cause that it is easily excited to evil by the persuasion of the devil and the world ; and is there not need of an inward rectitude in the will to bias it to a free embracing and close adherence to the good proposed to it by God, that his grace may be efficacious in every part ?

This work is a quickening a man under a universal spiritual death ; the will was dead, as well as the mind dark, which must have life instead of its deadness, as the other hath light instead of its darkness : and if they be two distinct faculties, then there are two distinct acts of the Spirit, though they depend one upon another. There is no less power requisite to make us spiritually willing, than to make us spiritually knowing ; since the corrupt habits in our wills are rather stronger than the prejudices in our understandings : therefore there seems to be a distinct act in removing the resistance from the one, as well as expelling the darkness from the other. As the Spirit takes away the wisdom that was sensual, earthly, and devilish, so it divests the will of that disposition whereby it was enamoured to that devilish wisdom of the flesh, and makes it willing to cut off the right hand, and right eye, to deny sin, which is the very self, and engage

in an irreconcilable quarrel against all that which engrossed its choicest affections.

(3.) If the understanding hath such a power, by virtue of its illumination, without an act also of the Spirit upon the will, and a particular application of the understanding to the will, and the will to the understanding, *why did not Adam's will follow his understanding?* His understanding was clear, without darkness; his affections first made the rebellion; sense was the leader, and the will the follower. Eve's understanding was not silent under the temptation of Satan; her knowledge was actuated in that speech, *God hath said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die, Gen. 3. 3*; she cites the word, her understanding must needs concur with it, unless it were corrupted and darkened before the fall; where lay the resistance? In the affections, and the will which sided with them. Why may not the will, possessed with those evil habits, resist the understanding imperfectly restored to its primitive light, as well as Adam's will did where there was no scale or film upon the eye of his soul? and likely his affections had kept their due order, if the will had preserved its due dependence upon reason, and its sovereignty over the sensitive part.

Do we not find that our wills are oftener in contradiction to the true sentiments of our understanding, and in conjunction with the affections, than in a due subordination to the one, and commanding over the other? Is it not frequently seen, that men of much light, knowledge, and gifts of reason, answer not the end of that illumination, and are without a will to God? Besides, since corruption came in by the way of the affections, when the understanding was clear; how can regeneration of the will come in by the illumination of the understanding, without a particular operation upon the will and affections? If it be said, the will follows the dictate of the understanding; why

did it not so in Adam? If we were perfectly restored, as Adam was in innocency, without the grace of God in our wills, as well as light in our understandings, we were not like to keep up in due order.

(4.) God in his creatures gives not only a light and fancy in nature, but endues them with such *principles that incline them to their motion, as connatural to them*. Why then shall we not think, * since the will is an habitual power, that when the will is moved to supernatural ends, it is endued with such a supernatural habit, whereby it may be sweetly and readily moved to the chief good, as its proper object. Are there not corrupt habits in the will, which the scripture calls *lusts and the works of the flesh*, Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21, which the Spirit mortifies, as well as those in the mind? Why not then gracious habits set up in the room of the other in this faculty, as well as in the other?

(5.) If there were not a physical operation and habits in the will, what would become of *infants*, who cannot in that state be renewed without such a kind of working? They are not capable of moral exhortations; we cannot conceive any other way the Spirit hath to work upon them, but by such a physical operation, putting habits into their wills, whereby they are renewed and sanctified; they are capable of the habit, though not of the act. We never find our Saviour spending any exhortations upon infants, but he took them in his arms and blessed them; and told us, that *of such is the kingdom of heaven*; and if the kingdom of heaven be of such, there is some operation upon them different from this method of working only upon their understanding.

(6.) If there were not some operation of the Spirit upon our wills, regeneration and conversion would be *more our work than God's*. If the Spirit terminates his working only upon the understanding, and the will be moved by the understanding alone, without any conjunction of the Spirit in the work upon the

* Ferrius, cap. 32. p. 496.

will ; then the Spirit doth not immediately concur to the chiefest part of regeneration, but as it illuminates the mind ; for the chief part of renewing grace is in the will : so it would be more our work than God's, if the moral only were his, and the physical operation only ours. It was in a less affair than this, wherein David blessed God for the people's willingness, offering so freely ; acknowledging it indeed the people's act, but by God's overruling their wills, *1 Chron.* 29. 13, 14.

(7.) God is all in all in glory ; *When Christ shall have delivered the kingdom to his Father, God then shall be all in all*, *1 Cor.* 15. 28 ; all in their understandings, all in their wills ; he shall be the immediate cause of all things, and govern and dispose all things by himself, and for himself ; binding the souls of all the glorified by everlasting ligatures to himself : all in all to the glorified, all light in their understanding, all love and delight in their will, objectively, efficiently. What efficacy he hath in glory, shall we deny him in grace in every particular faculty ?

II. Proposition. Yet this work, though immediate, is not *compulsive* and by force. It is a contradiction for the will to be moved unwillingly : and force upon it destroys the nature of it ; if it be forced, it ceases to be will. It is not forced, because it is according to reason, and the natural motion of the creature ; the understanding proposing, and the will moved to an embracing ; the understanding going before the light, the will following after with love. The liberty of the will consists in following the guidance of reason ; to have a liberty to go against it, is the greatest misery of the creature : that is properly constraint, when we are compelled to work contrary to the natural way of working : there is no constraint by force, but there is a kind of constraint by love, because the Spirit accompanies this operation with so much efficacy, that instead of that sadness we should have in a thing we were forced unto, there is

an unspeakable joy and contentment in the soul ; it not being possible to taste so much of the love of God, to be delivered from so fearful a condemnation, to be brought to so glorious a hope, without being seized upon with much pleasure and delight.

God changes the inclination of the will, but does not force it against its inclination : the will, being a rational faculty, cannot be wrought upon but rationally. Since the main work consists in faith and love, it is impossible there can be any force : no man can be forced to believe against his reason, or love against his will, or desire against his inclination. Belief is wrought by persuasion ; no man can be persuaded by force. It cannot be conceived, that the will should will against the will. No man can be happy against his will, all happiness consisting in a suitableness of the object to the faculty : those things that in themselves are the greatest pleasures of the world, if they please not a man, cannot confer any happiness upon him. The Spirit never works thus ; because *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*, 2 Cor. 3. 17 ; he destroys not the liberty, but reduces it to will more nobly than before.

Besides, the liberty of the will does not stand in indifference to this or that thing, for then the will would lose its liberty every time it hath determined itself to any one thing, because after the determination it would be no longer indifferent to the other. But the liberty of the will consists in being carried out according to the dictate of the practical judgment, and not by a blind instinct. God doth not deal with us as stones, and logs, or slaves, whom the whip makes to do that which they hate in their hearts : but conducts us in ways agreeable to our nature : he calls, saying, *Seek you my face* ; and inclines the will to answer, *Thy face, Lord, I will seek*, *Psa.* 27. 8. That God who knows how to make a will with a principle of freedom, knows how to work upon the will, without intrenching upon, or altering the essential

privilege he bestowed upon it : he that formed us, as a potter doth his vessel, knows very well the handles whereby he may take hold of us, without making any breach in our nature.

III. Proposition. It is *free* and *gentle*. A constraint, not by force, but love, which is not an extrinsic force, but intrinsic and pleasant to the will ; he bends the creature so, that at the very instant wherein the will is savingly wrought upon, it delightfully consents to its own happiness : he draws by the cords of a man, and by a secret touch upon the will, makes it willing to be drawn, and moves it upon its own hinges. It is sweet and alluring : the Spirit of grace is called, the *oil of gladness* ; it is a delightful and ready motion which it causes in the will : it is a sweet efficacy, and an efficacious sweetness. At what time God savingly works upon the will, to draw the soul from sin and the world, to himself, it does with the greatest willingness, freedom, and delight, follow after God, turn to him, close with him, and cleave to him, with all the heart, and with purpose never to depart from him ; *Draw me, and we will run after thee, Cant. 1. 4* : drawing signifies the efficacious power of grace ; running signifies the delightful motion of grace : the will is drawn, as if it would not come ; it comes, as if it were not drawn.

His grace is so sweet and so strong, that he neither wrongs the liberty of his creature, nor prejudices his absolute power. As God moves necessary causes necessarily ; contingent causes, contingently ; so he moves free agents freely, without offering violence to their natures. The Spirit glides into the heart by the sweet illapses of grace, and victoriously allures the soul ; *I will allure her, and speak to her heart, Hos. 2. 14* ; not by crossing, but changing the inclination, by the all-conquering and alluring charms of love ; as a man does the person whom he intends for his spouse ; for to that he alludes ; because in the latter part of the chapter, he speaks of the consummation

of his marriage with the church; *In that day thou shalt call me Ishi*, ver. 16. in what day? In the day that he should allure her, and speak to her heart. God puts on the deportment of a lover in changing the frame of the will.

The Spirit is as one that leads the way into truth, (*The spirit shall guide you into all truth*, John 16. 13;) * not drags; he opens the heart, not by a forcible entry, but as a key that fits every ward in the lock. The attraction of the will is much like that of iron by the loadstone, which had no motion of itself, till the powerful emissions of the loadstone's virtue reached it, and then it seems to move with a kind of voluntariness; there is no force used, but a delicious virtue emitted, which doth, as it were, both persuade and enable it to join itself to its beloved attractor. There is a secret virtue communicated by God, which, as soon as it touches the soul, puts life and delightful motion into it, which before lay like a log. It embraces Christ as its portion, and passes a decree, that it will keep his words; *Thou art my portion, O Lord: I have said, that I will keep thy words*, Psal. 119. 57.

IV. Proposition. It is *insuperably victorious*. What the mouth of God speaks, what his will purposes, his hand fulfils, 1 Kings 8. 24. It is not a faint and languishing impression, but a reviving, sprightly, and victorious touch. As the demonstration of the Spirit is clear and undeniable; so the power of the Spirit is sweet and irresistible; both are joined, 1 Cor. 2. 4. An inexpressible sweetness allures the soul, and an unconquerable power draws the soul; there are clear demonstrations, charming persuasions, and invincible efficacy combined together in the work. † He leaves not the will in indifference. If God were the author of faith only by putting the will

* ὁδηγήσει.

† Amiraunt. Serm. de l'Evangil. Ser. 6. p. 316, 317.

into an indifference, though it be determined by its own proper liberty, why may not he also be said to be the author of unbelief, if by the same liberty of this indifference it be determined to reject the gospel? For in the same manner God is author of one motion of the will as well as of the other, if he does no more than leave the will in an *equilibrium*. This irresistibleness takes not away the liberty of the will. Our Saviour's obedience was free and voluntary, yet necessary and irresistible. He could not sin in regard of the hypostatical union, yet he had a greater aversion to sin than all the angels in heaven. Is not God freely and voluntarily good, yet necessarily so? He cannot be otherwise than good, he will not be otherwise than good. So the will is irresistibly drawn, and yet freely comes to its own happiness. The soul is brought over to God, and adheres to him, not by a necessity of compulsion, but of immutability. As the angels necessarily obey God, not by compulsion, but from an immutable love. A sinner is necessarily a servant to sin; a regenerate man necessarily a servant to God; both by a kind of necessity of nature. Our main business then is to see, what new enlightenings there are in our minds by the Spirit in the gospel; what taste and relishes we have of divine truths; how our wills are allured to a sincere and close compliance with the proposals of God in the gospel; what vigour is in them. This is God's method, to work first upon the understanding, then upon the will. That work which begins first in the affections, without light dawning and breaking in upon the mind, and growing up by consideration and enquiries into the gospel, is to be suspected, and is not like to be durable.

This is the scripture-method, and every regenerate person may find it more or less in himself.

PART IV.

INSTRUCTION AND COMFORT FROM THE EFFICIENT
CAUSE OF REGENERATION.

Insufficiency of education—Inefficacy of the word without the power of God—No confidence to be placed in our own purposes and resolutions—Nothing to be associated with God in the work of regeneration—Excellence of the work—Necessity of divine influence in the progress of it.—Recourse to the God of grace in all exigencies—For preserving grace—Strengthening grace—Increasing grace—Quickening grace—Perfecting grace—Considerations for the encouragement of the regenerate—God will rejoice in his work—Will destroy the enemies of it—Will order all things for the promotion of it.

IF God alone be the author and efficient of the new birth, then it doth instruct us how insufficient a good education of itself is to produce this work in the soul, and how unfit to be rested on without a further work. I doubt many may rest upon a religious education, without searching and inquiring into themselves what further work of God hath been wrought upon them. God hath intrusted parents with a power of instructing their children, but reserves the power of renewing grace to himself. If parents may set the object before them, God only can give them a spiritual eye to dis-

cern it : if they may inform the understanding, a divine touch only can bend the will : if they may lay the wood of spiritual lessons together, yet the fire to kindle them in the heart, and consume the lusts, must descend from heaven.

Education may correct, but not extirpate the malignity of nature : good instruction meeting with an orderly constitution, may sow the seeds of moral virtue, and restrain natural corruption, but not weed that out of our nature, or plant the root of grace, any more than the skilful management of a beast can change its natural inclination, though it may curb it. The folly bound up in the heart of a child, is too strong for the wisdom of man, and is wholly to be expelled by the wisdom which comes down from heaven, set up in the heart by Christ, who is the wisdom of the Father. The little stars of precepts glittering in the mind, cannot make the young plants sprout up with their heads towards heaven, without the influence of the sun ; Christ, the sun of righteousness, fixed in the soul by the Spirit, can do more than all the stars of moral instructions in the world.

Timothy had as religious instruction from his religious mother and grandmother, as any in the world, both being believers, yet Paul calls him his *own son in the faith*, 2 Tim. 1. 5, as having *begotten him in the gospel*, 1 Tim. 1. 2 : those instructions did not beget him, though they might facilitate the evangelical work, which was wrought by the gospel in Paul's ministry : therefore the apostle manifestly distinguishes between instructors and fathers. *Though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have you not many fathers ; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel*, 1 Cor. 4. 15. He distinguisheth their instructions from Christ the efficient cause, and himself through the gospel, the instrumental cause. Yet such instruction is not to be neglected when children are capable ; God may set home that by the gospel, which hath been sucked in, in younger years.

Men may as well turn their backs upon the hearing the word, because it is insufficient without the operation of the almighty grace. Instruction and prayer should go hand in hand together. But take heed of resting upon a good education.

Secondly, It instructs us, that regeneration does not *depend merely upon the word*, if God alone be the efficient cause of it. It depends upon the inward efficacy of the Spirit. Had it depended upon the power of the apostles, or the outward demonstration of the word, they would have converted all that they had preached to, they would not have suffered any to have remained obstinate against the gospel; charity would have obliged them to the exercise of their power; and their power would have made their charity effectual. As God seldom works without means; so means can never work without God. David had the law of God in his hand, but could not learn it without God's teaching; therefore he prays: *Teach me thy way, O Lord: I will walk in thy truth, Psal. 86. 11.* And in many places of the 119th psalm, he takes notice, that all spiritual knowledge comes from God, though in the way of his precepts: *Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies*, ver. 98; *Through thy precepts I get understanding*, ver. 104. While we use the means, our eye should be upon God. Thomas had his fingers upon our Saviour's wounds, but his thoughts upon Christ's divinity; *My Lord and my God*. Food maintains the body, but by virtue of the soul animating it, and enabling it to concoct that food. The Spirit of God is the soul of the gospel, and of all means, to make them efficacious: and with this power of the Spirit the weakest means can effect more than the greatest means without it, which, indeed can produce little or nothing. Peter's sermon, was but short, but improved by the Spirit, to the conversion of *three thousand souls, Acts 2.* Means can do nothing of themselves to change the heart. When the disciples had two ordinances representing

the death of Christ; i. e. the passover and the Lord's supper; pride, the great enemy to regeneration, put up its head above water; they quarrelled *who should be greatest*, *Luke 22. 24.*

Thirdly, There is no reason to confide in our own *purposes* and *resolutions*, or any *strength* of our own, if God alone be the efficient cause of regeneration. For it depends not upon our resolves without the grace of God. Satan fears not our vows, he knows, without grace, they are but as light feathers, easily to be puffed away by him; but sparks which without his breath, the flood of corruption in our souls would extinguish as soon as they begin to appear. How can our resolves without grace renew us, when Peter's resolve, with his inherent grace, could not defend him? Who after his boasting, when certainly he sincerely meant what he said, fell so shamefully, that he stood in need of a new conversion. How soon do we, after a transient awakening, fall into spiritual sleep? If grace be not present with us to cure our lethargy, our purposes are as empty sails hoisted by us; the breath of the Spirit only fills with a full gale for motion.

We can never *steadfastly look into heaven, and see the glory of God*, unless we be *full of the Holy Ghost*, *Acts 7. 55.* Stephen's eye would have been dazzled, had not the divine Spirit fixed it. How soon will a slight blast of a temptation shake a building, which hath no other foundation but the moveable sand of our own purposes, when as slight a temptation shook the image of God out of Adam with all its brightness, who was built with God's own hand, with a power also to keep himself? Adam could not be without purposes of obedience, when he heard the precept, yet with a slender temptation came tumbling to the dust, and fell as low as hell. A vain confidence in our own resolutions, is so far from being a cause of this spiritual birth, that it is rather a hindrance, and part of the pride of nature, that must be demolished, and to be reckoned as one

of the eldest things among these old things that are to pass away. Trust not therefore to yourselves; look up daily for the divine influence; lean not to your own understanding, though in part enlightened; confide not in your own wills, though in part inclined to the best things; pursue nothing in your own strength.

Fourthly, It is an injury to God to associate any thing with him in this work, which he challenges as his own production. Would it not be a disparagement to deny him the sole efficiency in one of the noblest works of his wisdom and holiness? That he who wrought the comely fabric of the first creation by his own power and wisdom, without a co-partner, or deputing any of the highest angels to bring the world into form; should not have the honour of a work which bears the stamp of a higher wisdom and power than the whole creation! That he who contrived the models of the little creatures in the world, should leave this to the foolish contrivance of any creature! Why should we imagine that the Divine image, upon which the highest blessedness of the creature depends, should be of so little value in the judgment of God's infinite wisdom, as to be turned over from the care of so wise a workman, to the capriciousness of a light and uncertain will, more blind and mutable than Fortune, the heathen goddess?

It is more, as we have heard, to frame so excellent a piece as the new creature is, out of the rubbish of sin, than to frame the whole celestial and elementary world out of a rude mass of matter; since there is a greater gulf to be shot between corruption and grace, than between nothing and the beautiful structure of heaven and earth; and therefore we may less disparage him, in denying him the title of Creator of the world, than that of the Creator of a new heart, since he hath promised by his own mouth to do it with his own hand. The apostle cannot be charged with ignorance, but knew what he said in that comprehensive thanksgiving for *all spiritual blessings in Christ*;

if all, then one of the highest, the new creation, is not intended to be left out of the roll of spiritual blessings; associating none with God, as the principal, but Christ as the Mediator, conveying this grace by his Spirit, according to the orders of the Father; *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, Eph. 1. 3.*

Fifthly. See from hence *how excellent* a thing it is to be born again, if God be the sole efficient of it! Whatsoever God is the author of in his ordinary works, is excellent in its kind; they are all the effects of his will; this is an effect of his gracious will: other generations are by the will of man, wherein the will of God concurs with them; this is solely by the will of God, without any concurrence of the will of man in the first work, called therefore, by way of excellency, *The faith of the operation of God, Col. 2. 12*, not a gift conveyed by angels, but his Spirit. A grain of grace of God's planting is more worth than millions of gold of man's getting: a more worthy gift than all the gold of Ophir, which God gives to men by their industry, who shall never see his face; but this by his own Spirit in order to glory: it is a royal gift he reserves in his own hands, to bestow upon those that were his favourites in his eternal purposes; it grows not in every man's ground, neither is it sown in every man's field.

The soul is more excellent than the body, not only in respect of its nature, but in respect of its immediate author: God is called particularly, *The Father of spirits*, not of bodies, though he is so; but in the production of bodies he acts by the hand of nature; in the production of the soul, by his own hand; in that work, he acts by the intervention of second causes; in this, without serving himself of any other efficient cause but his own will: if the soul, as being the only work of God, is therefore more excellent, then certainly a new-born soul is more excellent than

any thing in the world, in regard God is the author of it in a more peculiar manner by the operation of his choicest affections.

Sixthly. If God be the efficient of regeneration, then there is a *necessity* of the *influence* of God in all the *progress* of grace. It is yet imperfect; the same hand that planted it, must also water and dress it. There is a tough sinew left in man's will, which makes him halt, after he hath the new name of Israel put upon him; a weakness of faith, a coldness of love, a faintness of zeal. What he is the Creator of, is nursed by his providence; what he is the new Creator of, is fostered by a succession of grace: the scripture therefore appropriates all to him; he is the God that calls us, the God that anoints us, the God that carries us, the God that establishes us, the God that keeps us, and the God that perfects us. He is the author of grace in its first issue, its fruitful sproutings, its delicious ripenings; it depends upon him in creation, preservation, augmentation, as well as natural things depend upon him in all their progressive motions, from one degree to another, as the author of nature.

When nature was most unspotted, grace was necessary to preserve and fix it in that state. Adam needed the assistance of grace with the embellishments of nature. The same power that inspires us with life, inspires us with a perpetual continuation of it. If the tide that turns the stream of the river, desert it, and return to its own channel, the river will return to its natural current. Our hearts will decline, our life languish, unless fed by that supernatural efficacy which did first produce it. The plants cannot grow merely from their own internal form; nor trees bring forth their pleasant fruits without the influence of rain, and sun, feeding and hatching their innate spirits, and drawing them out to make a show of themselves in flowers and fruits; and when they are brought forth, they stand in need of the same rain to fill them, the same sun to ripen them.

Seventhly. If God be the efficient, &c. we see whither we are to have *recourse in all the exigencies* of the new creature; to whom, but to the Author of those beginnings of eternal life? God is all, in all parts of this glorious work; *The God of all grace, who hath called us into his eternal glory, make you perfect, strengthen, stablish, settle you,* &c. 1 Pet. 5. 10. There is need of preserving, strengthening, increasing, quickening and perfecting grace. These you need, and these must be sought, and will be had, from the same goodness and power by which you were new-born.

First. Preserving grace.

1. God *only* can give it: there is a necessity of it: as God rears it, so he only can keep it from pining away. Plants will wither, if the rain do not descend; the flame will be extinguished, if fuel be not added. There is as much a necessity of a constant influence to keep up this new nature, as there is of the sun to preserve the horizon from that darkness which would invade it upon the turning its face to other parts of the world. The perpetual duration of renewing grace, is not essential to grace; for then Adam and the angels had stood by virtue of their grace, for nothing ever loses its essential property; but it is by an additional grace, distinct from the first grace, wherein our regeneration consists; as the preservation of the creatures in their natural beings is by an act of God, distinct from his creative act. The first grace God gives now, is a bounty to his creature, but it is further an obligation upon himself, not as it is grace, or as it is his own work, for Adam's grace which failed, was wrought by his fingers, inspired by his breath; but as it is a new-covenant-grace which alters the condition of it. God's finger wrote the law in the heart, and his breath can only blow the dust off, that would fill the engraved letters.

2. God will *preserve* it. Job would argue with God, and ask him, *Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands?* Job 10. 3.

Is it agreeable to his goodness and wisdom, to slight and neglect the work of his own heart; not a fruit of his common liberality to the creation, but a choice fruit of his redeeming love? His common love, as he is the author of nature, preserves the old creation; much more his special love, as he is the author of the new nature, will preserve the new creation; his general goodness made the world, but his gracious goodness formed the soul: the one is more splendid than the other, therefore the effect more durable. Mercy compasseth the godly about, *Psa.* 32. 10. like bulwarks that surround a city for its defence, against the assaults of spiritual enemies.

A higher providence attends man than other creatures, because he is of a more noble constitution: upon the same account, a higher providence must attend the new creature, as being far more noble than mere man: God embraces all creatures in his arms with a common love as creatures; he lays the new begotten ones in his bosom by a special love. His power too is to be considered. He will not want a power to preserve that which he did not want power to new create: the power being the same that raised Christ from the dead, which raised any from their natural condition. will have the same issue; since it never suffered Christ to return to the grave again, neither will it suffer any new-born soul to return to a spiritual death.

Every new creature is the Father's by purpose, and by actual traction; they were his before they were Christ's: the Father draws them to Christ; and the power of Christ will be as eminent to preserve them, as the power of the Father was to draw them. Why were the creatures brought by that instinct God put into them, into Noah's ark, but to be preserved from the destroying deluge? Why did he take pains to write the law anew in the heart, if he would suffer it to be dashed out again? If he would not preserve his own work, why did he not let the soul lie wallowing

in its old filthiness, and forbear the expence of those fresh colours he hath new-drawn his image with? It seems to be a greater power to take off all that load of sin which lay upon you, than to preserve you from having so great a burden again upon you. It is not reasonable to think, that God should be at so much cost, only to restore man to Adam's mutable condition, whereby to incur a greater condemnation.

Secondly. Strengthening grace: this we need, as well as preserving grace. It is God that strengthens us in the inward man: by that strengthening grace the new creature can do all things; without it, nothing. *Through him we are more than conquerors over principalities and powers, Rom. 8. 37, 38. Strength to mount up to heaven as an eagle, to run our race without weariness, to walk without fainting, to combat difficulties without sinking fears, is only to be had by waiting upon the Lord, who is the fountain whence all these flow, Isa. 40. 31; and by his grace confers a supernatural fortitude; But they that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles: they shall run and not be weary: they shall walk, and not faint, Isa. 40. 31.* Look not therefore for strength in your new nature, look for it in God, in that Spirit which first renewed you; since that glorious power is imparted to strengthen you which was at first employed to new-create you. This was the matter of the apostle's prayer for the Colossians; and this should be ours; *Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, Col. 1. 9, 11.*

There is much weakness in us, a medley of evils, an army of enemies, but the way is open for us to that glorious power, to endue us with a new vigour, which first seized upon us with an insuperable efficacy: our shattered and weakened sins shall not be able to resist that glorious power now, which they could not stand the shock of when they were in their full strength. *God will be a sun and a shield, Psal.*

84. 11 ; a sun to dispel our darkness ; a shield to secure us from darts : a sun against the allurements of the world, defeating them by a charming light : a shield against the terrors of the world, overpowering them by an irresistible force ; the sun that gave us life, the shield that secures our strength. The glorious power which we need in our progress, lies in the same arm which wrought our deliverance, and from thence must be fetched : it is only by him that we have strength to tread down the wicked one's temptations, and those fiery darts are made as ashes under the soles of our feet, *Mal.* 4. 3.

Thirdly. We need *increasing* grace ; and that is from God. The increase depends upon him, as well as the first planting : when we want it, he is the fountain from whence we must draw it ; so did the disciples ; *Increase our faith,* Luke* 17. 5 ; or, *add to us faith.* Every new spring, fresh bud, spreading blossom, is an addition by his influence. When we have it, we must acknowledge his sole hand in it : so the apostle did when he saw the growth of the Thessalonians' faith, and the abounding of their charity ; *We are bound to thank † God always for you, because that your faith grows exceedingly, 2 Thess.* 1. 3. He did it by obligation ; no such tie had lain upon him, had God left them to increase it themselves. The new fruits you bear, are from his new purifying, are the first power to bear was from his planting, *John* 15. 2.

If you would thrive spiritually, it must not be by your own, but by the increases of God : *God gives the increase*, both in the outward administration, and inward operation of the gospel, *1 Cor.* 3. 7. Faith, in every assent, is conducted by that power which first settled it in the heart, and without it cannot commence any higher degree. As every spark of spiritual life is by his kindling, so every sparkling of that spark is by his blowing. Look for it at God's hands, beg of him to

* προσθίς ἡμῖν. † ἐνχαριστεῖν ὀφείλομεν.

write that law deeper which his fingers first engraved in your hearts. It is God's being *a dew to Israel* makes him grow up in beauty as *the lily and the olive tree*; in strength, *cast out his roots as the cedars of Lebanon*, *Hos.* 14. 5, 6, 7. If you would grow up as calves of the stall, you must lie under the healing wings of the Sun of righteousness; *Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings*, &c. *Mal.* 4. 2. That sun which by his beams conveyed into you a spiritual life, can only by the same heat, influence you to a taller growth. Every drop of the knowledge of his will till you come to be filled, every mite of wisdom and spiritual understanding, is to be drawn from him only, *Col.* 1. 9; both the additions of knowledge, and the deeper impressions, and lively sproutings of what we know.

Fourthly. Quickening grace; this also we need. As our life, so the liveliness and activity of grace depends upon the divine influence; a divine motion is necessary to elevate our souls to those actions which are supernatural: our grace depends upon God *in actu secundo*, as well as *actu primo*: as God first puts a nature into creatures, in the exercise as well as the being, and then quickens them by his providential concurrence in those acts suitable to their nature, which acts are therefore natural to those creatures: so by a gracious concurrence he quickens the new nature in the soul to the exerting of gracious operations, according to that nature he hath endued it with. As he tunes the strings by his skill to fit them for a divine harmony; so he enlivens them by his touch to make what music he pleases; every heavenly prayer, every gracious groan, every start of spiritual affection, is from the Spirit tuning, quickening, assisting against infirmities and deadness. There must be a continued drawing, to make a continued running. *Draw us, and we will run after thee*, *Cant.* 1. 4. It was the church, the gracious church, the spouse and dove of

Christ, yet sensible of her own inability to quicken her pace to new communion with Christ, without fresh communications first from him. There is a bias in the soul to direct it in a right motion ; there must be a hand without, to put it upon that motion ; Christ must put his hand in at the hole of the door, before a lazy soul, though gracious, will stir at his call, *Cant.* 5. 3 ; or as the child which hath a principle of motion, must be assisted and quickened by the nurse, before it can move a step.

Grace is more prevalent to keep us from sin, than excite us to holiness ; yet neither can be done by it without new quickenings ; our motion is in him, and by him, as well as our life, spiritually as well as naturally ; *In him we live, move, and have our being; Acts* 17. 28 : the old stock must have continual supply : *Without Christ we can do nothing, John* 15. 5. Without him we cannot have grace in the plant, nor grace in the fruit. As the soul excites the spirits in the eye to an act of vision ; if they be not quickened by their governor, though things be before our eyes, they see nothing : so the Spirit of God excites, as it were, the spirits of grace, to their particular acts, faith to apprehend, and love to work : the goodness that made the promise, guides the hand of the soul to fasten upon it ; *Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope, Psal.* 119. 49.

As God makes the promises, so he makes the meeting between the soul and the promise ; every motion proceeds from God's touch upon the heart enlarging it ; therefore our dependance must be upon God's grace ; *I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart, Psal.* 119. 32 : I will run, not by my own strength, but by the hand of God enlarging and enlivening my heart. Indeed, if God did not give to act as well as implant the habit, he would give no more to us in the new covenant, than he gave to Adam in the old, who had a

power to do, but not the act of doing: his power was from God, but the act of obedience depended upon himself, and for want of actual obedience he fell. We see whence we must derive our quickenings; we want them, because we expect them from the new nature in us, not from the author of that nature, and the concurrence of his grace with it; and depending upon habitual, more than actual grace, is the cause of our having many a slip. We are as dead lumps, notwithstanding all the grace we have, if God do not cause a free life to spring up in us by successive breathings.

Fifthly. *Perfecting* grace is only from God. He is the finisher of what he is the author of, *Heb.* 12. 2, and in our spiritual warfare supplies us with new recruits, till the combat end in victory, and the victory in triumph. He will come *as the former and latter rain*, *Hos.* 6. 3. As the former rain to mollify the earth, and the latter rain to ripen the fruits of the earth: as he hath laid the foundation of mount Zion, so he will perform the whole work in it; he fulfills the work of faith with the same power wherewith he begins it, *2 Thess.* 1. 11. The power which caused the resurrection of Christ, caused his ascension: he had his forty days upon the earth, after his resurrection, before he was taken up to glory. There is a continuance of a believer in the world after his resurrection from a spiritual death: but the same power which caused his spiritual resurrection, will as surely cause his heavenly ascension. That arm that brought him out of Egypt, will conduct him to the limits of Canaan, the flourishing pastures of the promised land.

Grace is the first gift; glory is the latter; glory follows upon the heels of grace; *He will give grace and glory*, *Psal.* 84. 11. Grace to fit for glory, and glory to reward his own grace; all grace till it ends in glory. God must be sought and depended on for this: we cannot will our perfection without grace, as

we cannot will our regeneration without grace : God gives the will, the progressive as well as the initial will. Then seek only to God, depend upon him only, for the warmth of his goodness, to bring those chickens to perfection which he hath gathered under his wing ; his affections are not tired, it is a pure disinterested love mingled with no defects ; his wisdom and power is no less able to perfect, than his love is to incite him to it.

The second use is of comfort.

Is God the author of regeneration ? He that is the God of all grace is the God of all comfort too : where he is the one, he will be the other. As he creates the soul to good works, so he creates it to heavenly consolations : when God acts as a God of justice towards sinners, he appears as a terrible God in his punishments : when he acts towards saints as a God of grace, he appears as a comforting God ; he fills the one with all terrors, prepares the other for all comforts ; he calls you by a new creation into his eternal glory, and sends therefore some sparkles of glory into the soul here. Are you born of God ? You approach in excellency as near to Christ as a creature's capacity will admit. Christ was his natural begotten Son ; believers his spiritually regenerated children. Christ is *the first-born*, but *among many brethren*, *Rom. 8. 29*, that Christ *that sanctifieth*, and we that *are sanctified, are all of one*, *Heb. 2. 11*, of one nature, say some ; of one Father, say others ; therefore he is *not ashamed to call them brethren* ; one nature does not so much make us brethren, as one Father. Christ was not regenerated, but generated ; he stood not in need of the other, because the first generation failed not ; neither could he, being God : he is the exact image of his Father's person, and so particularly of all his attributes, because he partakes of his essence : believers are the living images of God's holiness, not partaking of all his attributes, but of that.

Particularly,

1. God will *rejoice* in his own work. If he rejoiced in the first planting of his image at the creation, he will no less rejoice in it at the restoration; and with more gladness embrace the son that is returned from death to life, by returning from his debauched course, than that son that remained with him all the while. Why does he renew the face of the earth by the mission of his Spirit, but that he may rejoice in his works? *Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the earth. The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works, Psal. 104. 30, 31.* If God shall in time rejoice in the earth, wherein he had little joy after the creation of it, and soon repented of his work; he will rejoice in the noblest work, in the frame of his image, which, next to Christ, makes all other works of the lower creation pleasant to him. He *creates Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy, Isa. 65. 18, 19,* and he will rejoice in the new creation of his people, in the people he hath new created.

2. He will *destroy all enemies* to his own work. How will his love pierce into every part, and employ his power in destroying the enemies of his work! whip buyers and sellers out of his spiritual temple, cast out all their remaining rubbish; let not his house be always a den of thieves, that shall rob God of his glory, and his temple of its beauty. That God that can raise men, five thousand years ago dead, as easily as one dead the last minute, can remove all the bands of corruption, though never so strong: if he has raised you from death, he will lift you up from all the remainders of death; the grave-clothes which yet remain about you, shall be in time untied, as well as the soul unloosed from the principal bands of death. Though there be in you a *spirit that lusteth to envy*, as well as a spirit that lusts to love, yet *God gives more grace, James 4. 5, 6,* lusts will down, corrup-

tions fall in time before his grace: darkness must hide its hated head, when that word breaks louder from his lips, *Let there be light*. The promises of a thorough sanctification belong to you, as well as the promises of a perfect remission: if God be the teacher, no matter what the scholar is: if God be the workman, no matter what the matter is: if God be the guardian, no matter what the enemies are: nothing is too rugged for his skill, or too hard for his power.

3. He will order all things *for the good* of his own work. *They shall not labour in vain; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, Isa. 65. 23.* He did not want grace to restore them, he will not want comforts to support them. Their very afflictions shall be ordered to preserve the work of his own heart in them; and he prunes and cuts away the luxuriant corruptions, that his vine may be more beautiful and delicious; and if he chastens you sharply, it is that you may be nearer *partakers of his holiness, Heb. 12. 10.*

PART V.

THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE REGENERATE, AND
UNREGENERATE.

The regenerate walk humbly with God—Ascribe their regeneration to him—Acknowledge him in the regeneration of others—Contentment with every condition—Walking worthy of God as the author of regeneration—The regenerate mourn over their sins—The unregenerate exhorted to seek this great change—To seek it in the use of means—To look solely to God in the means—To plead with God from the attributes he honours in regeneration—To be deeply sensible of corruption—And not to grieve the Spirit of God in any of his operations.

I NOW, in further improving this subject, address myself,

First. To the *renewed*. And I exhort them,

1. Walk *humbly*. Swell not big, as if your own power had procured it; let not pride spread its sails in your souls. Consider you are creatures still, though new creatures: as God put into you whatsoever you have of a natural existence, so he has put into you whatsoever you have of spiritual: you are dust still by natural creation, though new formed by the Spirit. There is nothing of grace, no act of grace, but you receive mediately or immediately from God. You opened not your own eyes, nor thrust back the lock of your own

hearts, nor can call one spark of that spiritual life you have, your own creature : it moved not at your beck, obeyed not your orders ; it is when God saith, go, that it goes, and do this and that, settle upon this or that soul, and it does it : how humble should you be ! since grace does nothing in any, but by God's order, not your own. God works in us, we add nothing to God. The melted wax receives the stamp from the seal, but the wax adds nothing to the seal. *What hast thou that thou hast not received ? If thou didst receive it, why dost thou boast as if thou hadst not received it ?* 1 Cor. 4. 7. Grace is God's communication to you, not yours to yourselves. What is received, is not your own work, but another's gift ; were it desert, we had reason to boast ; but being a gift, we have no reason to grow big. Lie therefore before him in your own nothingness. Renewing grace first lighted upon you when you were humble ; and grace in its increase flourishes when the soul is in the same posture.

2. *Ascribe all that you are, as renewed creatures, to God.* Ascribe it wholly to him ; let self rub off every filing of this gold from its own fingers. *Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name be the praise,* Psal. 115. 1. The repetition removes the glory far from themselves. If *praise* be comely for an *upright* person, it is most comely in the greatest cause than can happen to him, Psal. 33. 1. Account yourselves therefore nothing, and God and grace all ; and let no shoutings be heard in your souls, while God is rearing up the divine temple, but those of *grace, grace,* Zech. 4. 7, both in the foundation, and superstructure, till he comes to the top-stone. Your breathing after God, is but the effect of his breathing after you : the moon hath no light of herself, but what she receives from the sun ; nor any creature a spark of grace, but what is derived from the Father of lights. God's purity is as the sun ; your grace as

a beam from that sun, not primitive in your nature, but derivative from God.

Were it not from grace, Saul had never been Paul, nor Peter a penitent, nor Mary a convert, nor Zaccheus a christian, nor hadst thou ever been brought to the sweetness of a spiritual life, or advanced to the state and comforts of another world. Did you will to run, till mercy moved your wills, and spirited the feet of your souls? Your will, your race was nothing; *God's grace was all, Rom. 9. 16.* Was it not his word of command, *Let there be life?* Was it not his invincible power battered down the strong holds of sin? O seriously think, O christian, that dry and desert heart of thine could never have been mollified and watered by rocky nature, nor virtue ever bud and blossom in that barren soil, unless the soil were mended, as well as the plant fixed, by some powerful hand: bless God, therefore, since, had it not been for him, you had never been humbled, never been renewed, never reached so high as a holy desire, or a penitential tear, but lain till this day, and for ever, bemired in fallen nature.

That you may know what reason you have to bless God with the highest praises, consider, (1.) What your obligation is, *how great!* What good would your creation have done you since your fall, without a new creation by the same hand? It must have rendered you miserable without this, and could never have rendered you happy but by the intervention of this. Without this you might have been his sons and daughters by creation, and devils by corruption. The heathens were God's offspring, as they were rational creatures, *Acts 17. 28,* and the devil's children as they were corrupt creatures. You might have had the image of God in a glimmering reason, without his image in a divine holiness. Was it not a greater obligation to restore that with kinder circumstances which you had wilfully thrown away, when it was in no wise due to you, than it was at first to bestow it?

There was something like debt at first; supposing God would create a rational creature, integrity and innocency was naturally due to it, in regard to the holiness and wisdom of God, unless he would have been the author of the creature's sinfulness; but since that voluntary defection, the restoration was in no sort due; therefore the obligation greater.

If God had created a thousand worlds, and given you the lordship of them for some millions of years, had this been such a kindness as to afford you a new nature, whereby you will be eternally happy in a likeness to God, and enjoyment of him? As the work of redemption, so this of regeneration, darkens the glory of the work of creation; since more of grace, wisdom, power, holiness, are the springs of it, the obligation must be far greater: the difference is as great as between heaven and earth. Will you not bless God for making you creatures; for recovery from a fit of sickness? Is the obligation less in delivering you from a spiritual death? Is not the reason of blessing God greater for the second creation, than the first, since it is the same skill adorns you with his image in the new creation, which beautified man with that image at the first.

(2.) Was there not as much *unfitness* in you, as in the *worst of men by nature*? Not one good disposition grew upon nature, but all was the work of preventing grace: could then the iron gates of your hearts fly open of themselves? Or could any else but a God break them open? Was not your nature carried as violently to sin, as any; perhaps not into such brutish sins as others, yet more refined and devilish? If you did not launch out into the grossest sins, you owe your preservation to restraining grace. That Socrates was better and wiser than another, was from God in the acknowledgment of a heathen*, who says he was chosen to virtue by the *divine suffrage*: Were your strings better? sure they were of God's tuning. Man

* Κατα τὴν Θεοῦ χειροτονίαν.

was not more unfit for a natural being before God created him, than the best man in the world was for a spiritual being, till God wrought him with his own finger. Was not the worst in the world naturally as fit for it, as yourselves? Did any better thing dwell in your flesh, than in theirs, to give grace entertainment? Did not grace at first make its way, conquering and to conquer, and not one blow struck by you to facilitate the victory?

Nay, were you not so far from having a grain of grace by nature, that there was nothing but opposition and rebellion against the author of it? Did you not want every thing to make you lovely in God's eye? Nay, did you not hate him, while he had a love of benevolence towards you? And have you not reason to bless him then, that he would not disdain to look upon you, such an impure and rebellious creature? Perhaps your case was the same with hers, *who said, I will go after my lovers, Hos. 2. 6*; she decreed to follow her idols, and was resolved not to be reclaimed; but God resolved otherwise, ver. 6, 7, who would not leave her, till he had made her change her base and unworthy resolution, for better; *She shall say I will return, &c.* And was it not a happy resolution in the divine breast, not to suffer you to run mad and furiously to hell? What an irrecoverable condition had you been in, if God had not spoken a powerful word, *hitherto thou art gone, but no further shalt thou go?* Were you not once *in your blood, and pitied by no eye*, when God said, *live?* And can you not wonder at the mercy of his lips, and raise your notes above an ordinary strain? Read over the records of the first work upon thy heart, and see if any thing were written there with thy own finger: The very sense of thy own wretchedness, was God's writing on thy heart; thou wast weighed in the balances, and found wanting, lighter than vanity, nothing of thy own to concur with God, but folly and misery.

(3.) If grace found thee unfit and rebellious, there

could then be *nothing of the least desert*: and this should make you cast a wondering eye at the greatness of God's kindness. Man's voluntary defection, without any violence offered to him, had rendered him unworthy of any recovery: you did no more deserve it, than the worst devil, who shall never have one line of it drawn upon him. Not one previous disposition, not one sigh or groan for it, could be discerned; much less the draught itself: Your true earnings were nothing but that death you lay under. The unloosing any band of it, or knocking off any fetter, was merely free grace. Is there not then reason to bless the Lord, when an undeserved power has been put forth to new-create you, when a deserved power might have buried you for ever under your own ruins?

Suppose you had been the most exact moralists in the world, the supernatural grace of the new birth could not be deserved by you, because nothing can be merited but by an act as excellent as the reward. No man can merit by any act a thing of a greater value than the act itself; but this grace is of another order, and far superior to any moral natural work. Indeed upon covenant, if a man does such a thing, he shall have such a reward; the thing promised may be challenged upon the performing the condition, but cannot be said to be merited, because the act was inferior to the reward in the true value of it; but this grace could neither be merited nor challenged at God's hand upon a condition, since he had made no promise in this kind to give you a right to such a demand. It is one thing to be capable of it, another thing to have a just right. A sinner in the state of sin is capable of being changed, but not capable of having a right to that change. Well then, you could never deserve such a mercy; and will you not prize it, and bless God for it?

(4.) Since you did not deserve it, no nor the proposals of it, consider *what a condition you had been in, had God left you to yourselves*, or put your wills only into an indifference. Had it been by a mere suasion,

or a naked proposition of the truth, I suppose you are so sensible of the mutability of your wills, that you might well believe you should scarce have complied with God. Your security at best had been but as good as Adam's who had his *posse*, but not his *velle*. What furious passions and devils in your souls were set against him? and had you been left to your own choice, you would not have stirred one foot to follow his chariot. If you did *purify your souls in obeying the truth, it was through the Spirit*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 22; and all the faith you have, was from the same fountain; *which believed through grace*, *Acts* 18. 27. Put it to yourselves; do you think your hearts were not so stout, that nothing but divine grace could mollify them? Do you think there would have been any heat or warmth in you, unless God had kindled the flame? Can you imagine your frozen hearts would have melted, but by a divine breath? It is happy for you that God would put your wills beyond an indifference, and deal with you by the same power as he dealt with Christ, not leaving him or you in a doubtful state between life and death.

How happy was it for you that God would be conqueror, and surmount your resistance; tame your force, scatter your counsels, level your mountain, and bring your fierceness under the yoke? That he would not wait your choice and leisure, but make the event certain? That he had mercy on you, because he would have mercy? That he would turn the stream of your hearts by the over-mastering tide of his grace, and overpower the flesh in the chief parts of your souls, and secure the rational powers of mind and will for himself? How glad may you be of the loss of that indifference, that secures your happy estate for ever? Who that is in favour with a prince, would not willingly have his will fixed to please him and dread nothing more than such an indifference whereby he might hate his prince, and lose his favour?

(5.) Is there not reason you should bless God when he has dealt thus graciously with you, and *not*

with many others in the world? Why any of you should be raised up to a spiritual life, when you see many others near you stretched out in a spiritual death, why one upon the same bench and not another; why one should be gathered with his arm, and another left to the jaws of the devouring lion; why you should have any choice fruit grow in any of your hearts, when thorns and briers grow in every hedge. That God should have afforded you means of regeneration, and not to most others in the world, is a ground of blessing and praise, much more that he should afford you the grace of regeneration, and not to many others under the same means: he has not dealt so with every nation in giving them the means, *Psal.* 147. 19, he has not dealt so with every person in giving them the grace. That *wind that bloweth where it listeth*, has left other dry bones to remain dry still; passed by others more civil, and of sweeter conversation; drawn his image in one, and left others to fall down to hell in the likeness of Adam, wherein they were born; overlooked one that was not far from the kingdom of heaven, and laid hold on another that was many leagues further from Christ.

The Spirit of God only makes this distinction; he will pour out his grace in Galatia and Macedonia, and not suffer it to be known in Bythinia; *And they essayed to go into Bythinia, but the Spirit suffered them not, Acts* 16. 6, 7, 8: Cause it to rain in one city, on one person, and not on another; call one out of the grave, and leave others under the bands of death, and in the dregs of human nature. You see your calling, and you may see how distinguishing it is, *Not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, 1 Cor.* 1. 26. Can you see this, and not bless the caller, the renewer? A less favour wrought so much upon David's heart, that he would bless God in spite of mocks and scoffs, *2 Sam.* 6. 21. Oh rich discriminating grace! Where any are peculiar monuments of grace, they should have peculiar notes of praise. What

reason can others have to bless God, if such should have no hearts to bless him for so great a mercy? All are under God's will of precept; all are under his will of promise, if they perform that precept; but all are not under his will of purpose, to give them strength to perform that precept.

(6.) It is to be considered too, with what *pains and patience* God wrought this work in your hearts. You may best know what God had to do with your hearts before they were thus formed according to his will. Were they not as clay to the potter, which needed much tempering before they were fit for use? Did God find that pliability in you, that the devil found? Had he a cordial welcome at the first proffer? Do you not remember resistance enough to make you for ever ashamed that ever you should put the blessed God to that toil? and yet you know not the thousandth part of that resistance God knew was lodged in your nature. Do you not remember how he met you at every turn, hedged up your perverse way with thorns, before he could be admitted to speak a word to your heart? How he answered one objection after another, whereby you would have stifled his work?

Can you remember this, and not admire the mercy that took such pains with so unprofitable a heart? It is called a resurrection, but it is more; before the resurrection of the body, one part of man lives, and waits for re-union, though the body be crumbled into very dust; but there is no life in you naturally; so little in you to take part with God, that even that which is the glory of man, his mind, and reason, and wisdom, were in arms against this work, as well as the sensitive and brutish part; for the *carnal mind was enmity against God, Rom. 8. 7.* What was your language to God at first, but like that of the hellish Spirit in the man in, *Luke 4. 34. What have we to do with thee?* Yet he dealt with you as the sun with the earth, which scatters the mists it sends out to choke its light, and spreads its warm wings over the face of

the world. So does God, though men offend him with the steam of their sins, and uncivilly command him to depart from them, yet he leaves them not till he hath made them willing that he should do them good.

(7.) The work itself requires admiration and blessing in regard of the *excellency* of it. It is more admirable than all the miracles of nature ; the whole world can no more compare with it, than a dunghill can equal the worth of a rock of diamonds ; all blessings which make you happy spiritually and eternally, are wrapped up in it. What can God give greater than his own nature ? What are you capable of more than what he hath done and will do upon that foundation ? If God had only given thee knowledge, thou mightest have been a devil for all that ; but the new nature makes you equal with angels. What man or angel could you be born of with so great advantage, as to be born of God ? There is no higher being of whom you could be born. You are new born according to that image after which his only Son was eternally begotten ; conceived by that Spirit whereby Christ was conceived in the womb of the blessed virgin, raised by the same almighty hand whereby the great pattern of the new birth was raised from the dead : it is the highest elevation of human nature, to be united to the Son of God, and to be made like to that glorious image. Greater gifts cannot be, than these two ; Christ to descend to partake of human nature, and the creature elevated to partake of the divine. If you will not loudly bless him for this, what can God do that shall deserve your praise, since a greater he cannot confer, more full of the spirits of his favour towards you ?

(8.) May there not be *some circumstances in your particular new birth*, that may raise your hearts to blessing and praise ? Perhaps thou wert *born in a day*, as his promise is of a *nation*, *Isa.* 66. 7, 8 ; and without those racking pains which attend the new birth of many ; he did not take thee by the throat,

nor arrest thee with legal terrors ; but breathed upon thee with a gentle wind ; conceived and formed thee in a little space of time, that thou wert within the prospect of heaven, before thou thoughtest thyself out of the suburbs of hell ; and brought thee forth a man-child, before thou didst imagine thyself to be delivered. Was it not mercy to renew thee without worrying thee ? To melt thee by a gentle fire of love, not break thee piece-meal by the hammer of wrath ? That thou shouldst scarce discern the lance from the balsam, and the wound from the healing remedy ? Perhaps he arrested thee in a full course of sin, in some desperate career, when some plot was laid for a high piece of wickedness. It had been an act of his power, hadst thou been brought up in some religious family, tutored in the ways of religion by a choicer education ; but perhaps God took thee from the very steams of hell, when thou hadst not one thought of him, and he might have let thee alone, as well as he did others of thy companions. It had been admirable power to turn clear water into wine ; but more, to turn stinking and putrified water into a generous wine. Do not the visible characters of mercy and power in such a case call for more praise at thy hands ? Can any other cause have a pretence to put in for a share in thy acknowledgments.

(9.) You are not without *many examples* to move you to this acknowledgment. Our Saviour himself could not regard the Centurion's faith without astonishment. He wondered at that in his humanity, which he wrought himself by his divinity, *Matt. 8. 10.* And when Peter professes his faith in him by acknowledging him to be the Son of God, Christ presently owns his Father as the author of it ; *Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven, Mat. 16. 17.* Angels sang both at the first and second creation, and shouted for joy when the corner stone thereof was laid, *Job. 38. 6, 7.* When they saw its beautiful order, they then showed

themselves to be the sons of God indeed, in glorifying their Father for his incomparable works. The second creation being more glorious than the first, is not celebrated by them with fainter shoutings; if God has then hallelujahs for you, it is fit he should have hallelujahs from you. If angels speak loud, it is not fit you should speak low; it is their concern, as they are God's friends and servants; your concern, as you are his workmanship, of his own carving.

The saints in all ages of the church have led the way in this acknowledgment. The elders, made kings and priests on earth, in a conquest of Satan and their own hearts, crowned with a blessed grace, cast down their crowns at the feet of God; *For thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created*, Rev. 9. 11; both the present new creation, and the old. *Thou hast loosed my bonds*, Psal. 116. 16; what follows? *I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving*. And God's renewing David's youth like the eagle's, his changing him into a new man, saith Jerome, is one argument of David's praise, Psal. 103. 5. Add to this, * Heathens have acknowledged it to be the work of God; one examining the reason why Homer calls virtuous men *δῖος*, answers, because goodness was not a work of art, but *ἔργον Διὸς*. † If divining and mystical knowledge be *θεία τιμὴ ἐπιπνύουσα*, by divine inspiration, shall we say of virtue it is *ἔργον τέχνης θνητῆς*, the work of man's art? Where do you find any like Nebuchadnezzar, gazing upon the divine formation in his own heart, and proudly crying out, *Is not this great Babylon which I have built?* Does such language drop from a David's mouth? No; but, *thou hast quickened me*: or from Paul? No; *by grace I am what I am*. Every inch, every spark, every joint of the new man is from grace.

* Max. Tyr. Dissert. 22. p 211. 216.

† Plato saith, Men are *θεία μοι, ἀγαθὰ*.

(10.) If you do not acknowledge it to God, and bless him for it, *you may justly suspect you are not born of him.* It is the nature of true grace to reflect back upon God, as it is of a sun-beam shining upon a wall, to reflect back upon the sun. Blessing God for it, is a character of a renewed man; it is an evidence of the ruin of the contradiction of nature against God, when man can strip himself of all, and own God the prime fountain of what he is and hath. If a man boast of his being the cause of a new birth in himself by any work of his own, it is a shrewd sign he is not renewed; because by such boasting he crosses the main end of the gospel, which is to stain the pride of man, and debase him to the dust from all grounds of glorying in himself. How jealous was the apostle in this case, and therefore backs his assertion again and again, that he might beat man's hands off from fingering any thing of God's glory; *by grace you are saved, Eph. 2. 5*; again, *and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God, ver. 8, 9*: once again, *not of works*: and the reason why he is thus earnest, was perpetually to discountenance self-confidence, *lest any man should boast.* The design of God in all gospel dispensations, is to pull away the stool whereon the flesh sits to glory, *that no flesh should glory in his presence, 1 Cor. i. 29, 31.* It would seem strange that the new birth, a main gospel-work, should be wrought without promoting a gospel-end; to have a new birth, and such a flourishing pride, opposite to the end of it, is a contradiction. If the doctrine of faith excludes boasting, as *Rom. 3. 27*; boasting is excluded *by the law of faith*: the grace of faith also will exclude it: where the new birth is wrought, pride, the great enemy to it, will surely be captivated. We are then something in and by God, when we are most nothing in ourselves.

Then: be much in the work of praising God, who shined into thy heart when it was dark, and sealed instruction to thee; who took away the stony heart,

and introduced one of flesh in the room : who manifested a day of power in the night of your weakness ; can you, dare you, ascribe it to yourselves ? Let God then have the praise ; it is our fault, we are more in complaints of what we want, than acknowledgments of what we have : O rob not God of his Deity, pretend not yourselves partners with him in the least of the stock. The more you return the glory of his grace, the more will he return the comfort of it to you : the more you give him that glory he is so jealous of, the more he will give you that grace he is so liberal of.

3. A third duty for those that are renewed ; *acknowledge* God in all the changes you see in *others*. Miracles must be regarded. It is greater for the apostles to act with new hearts, than to speak with new tongues ; greater than to stop the sun in its course, which would set all the world upon an astonished gaze. Shall any such miraculous work be done in our view, and we stand only as stupid spectators, and not render to God that glory which is due to him for his choicest work ? As the sight and consideration of the material creation kept up the notion of the being of God as Creator : so the consideration of his works upon the souls of men will quicken thy sentiments of God as a new Creator. One is an argument to prove the power of his essence ; the other an argument of the power of his grace. Noah does not bless Shem first, for that act of filial duty showed to his father, but blesses God as the Author of that modesty Shem had shewn, in covering his father's nakedness ; *Blessed be the God of Shem*, *Gen.* 9. 26. When a great number were turned to Christ, Barnabas presently cast up his eye to the grace of God ; *He saw the grace of God*, *Acts* 11. 21, 23. Let every Lazarus you see raised from the grave, raise up your faith to a higher elevation, and dress it in a jubilee attire. When you see a new

temple reared to God, own it as the Lord's doing, and let it be marvellous in your eyes.

4. Be *content* with every condition into which your new Creator shall cast you. Discontent at any of God's dispensations ill becomes one whom God has new begotten to a glorious inheritance. What can he do more than he has done, and what he will do upon that foundation? All that he acts is to further that which he hath so powerfully and mercifully begun. What son would repine at the losing a rattle, as long as he is born to a never-fading inheritance? If grace hath put forth a power to new create you, it will not use that power otherwise than for your good. It may contradict your carnal desires, not your spiritual interest: well may any man be content with the jewel that is left, though the casket be lost. All things are too light, if put into the balance with the new birth; the dearest husband or wife, the sweetest children or friends, the most flourishing inheritance; study therefore contentment in the worst condition upon this ground: you know not how soon you may be put to practise all your skill; do you not see the heavens gathering blackness over your heads? A new birth, that allies us to God as his children, will be of more force to settle us, than calamities can be to discompose us; for never was child so dear to an earthly, as a new created soul is to its heavenly Father.

5. Walk *worthy of the author of it*. A verbal acknowledgment will signify little without a real imitation of the *virtues of him that hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light*, 1 Pet. 2. 9. A holiness is to be expressed by you, like the holiness of that God who hath renewed you. Let no devilish or brutish carriage be yoked with a divine birth; indeed it cannot; the bespotting corruptions of the world will not agree with the regeneration of the soul; the stains of the flesh are inconsistent with the

purity of the new nature. Belial and Christ, God and Satan, are not joint-begetters: Satan's impure breathings upon you should not be admitted to mix with the breath of God. A new nature by grace must not imitate a brutish nature by sin. A soul born of God must not be fashioned according to the world: if you differ from the world in your nature by grace, differ from the world also in your carriage by holiness. It is uncomely for one born of God to be taken with the foolish flaunting pride of the world more than the pattern of God hath set him; that is, to imitate beasts, not a heavenly Father. The world is little, nothing, vanity in the eye of God, so should it be in the eye of a divinely begotten soul. Use the world as travellers an inn, to lodge, not to dwell in, to accommodate you in your journey to that Father of whom you were born. Let a heaven-born nature be attended with heavenly flights, longing for that happy state wherein nothing but the divine nature shall be seen in you, as nothing but fire is seen in melted gold.

6. *Mourn* for your imperfections. Give God his due, and grieve for your defect in paying him his own: the soul in creation comes pure out of God's hand; but it is poisoned by the flesh, and the impurity in the sensitive part of man. Though your grace be from God, yet your imperfections are from yourselves. The waters that run through sulphur and alum mines, flow from the sea; but the ill taste and scent are communicated by the matter it mixes with in its passage. God is the author of your faith, but not of the weakness of your faith; the author of your love, but not of the coldness of your love; the author of your zeal, but not of the faintness of your zeal. Chide your hearts therefore for your weakness, as Christ did his disciples for their slowness of faith. *Rejoice with trembling*, *Psa.* 2. 11; rejoice in what you have, and mourn for what you want, and come short in. Reason you have, since there is too much

of the power of nature remaining with our best grace ; so that it may be said of it, as Lot of Zoar, what grace hath enclosed, *is but a little one.*

Secondly. To those that *are not born of God.* You see at whose hands you are to seek it. God was the first contriver of the gospel, the first preacher of the gospel, the sole artist in any gospel operation : *No man can come, except the Father draw him :* not some men, but no man ; every man must therefore seek to this great attractor. It is a vanity of human nature, that every man loves to be *αὐτοδιδάκτορ*, his own teacher ; and no less a vanity it is that every man loves to be *αὐτογέννητορ*, his own begetter. Men glory in the knowledge they get without a teacher ; and no less glory in any change they can hammer out without a spiritual father. As he that scorns to be taught by another, shall surely have a fool to his tutor : so he that thinks to gain spiritual life by himself, shall be sure to have death for his quickener. No man would seek life from death, or light from darkness ; and the best natural man is no better. The glory of the Lord must rise upon us, before we can rise out of our death in sin. *Arise, and shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, Isa. 60. 1.*

1. Seek it *only* at the hands of God. It is not to be had by outward rules, but divine influence : the streams of life must come from him, since with him only is the *fountain of life.* *I will give a heart of flesh, Psa. 36. 9.* I alone, without other co-ordinate cause, either man or angel. He only hath the key of the heart, as well as that of the womb ; confide not in yourselves, Adam was a root to convey sin and death, but no root to convey spiritual life : corruption comes by propagation from him, grace only by spiritual regeneration from God : would any wise man seek for water in a desert ? or for grace from himself, who is naturally a dry wilderness ? What toad, naturally full of poison, ever made himself sweet and

wholesome? As Christ was by the grace of God made partaker of our nature in his incarnation, so by the same grace only can we be made partakers of his nature by regeneration; we are naturally weeds; if ever we be flowers in God's garden, the transformation must be God's act alone.

Seek it of God. But seek it in the *use of means*; not abating any thing of thine own industry: seek, while God offers it: hold your mouth under the fountain while it runs. Moses hewed the tables, but God wrote the law. God promised David and Gideon victory, but not with their hands in their pockets, but their arms and armies about them. Moses must fight with the arms of Israel, but pray to the God of battles and victory; we must with one hand use the directions God hath given, and lift up the other in spiritual supplication for success upon them. Therefore let not the doctrine of God's being the cause of the new birth, encourage your laziness and sloth: this sloth among men, Chemnitius thought to be the occasion of Pelagius's error, who seeing the laziness of christians, thought to correct it by making them think highly of their own strength; but that was a dangerous extreme.

And in the use of means, let your eye be *solely upon God*, since all the means in the world cannot do it without him. Unless God pull up the flood-gates, no water of life can stream into the soul; means can no more of themselves cast out death, than the disciples could cast out some devils: but Christ was able to do what they could not. All the angels in heaven, and men upon earth, have not been able, these almost six thousand years, to make one fly; yet all the angels and the whole frame of the world were made by God in six days. Men speak to the sense, God to the heart; they to the understanding, and God into it: men argue with the will, and God persuades it. All the clamours of the whole nation of the Jews, yea, of all the men in the world, would not have made Laza-

rus *stir* out of the grave, had not our Saviour spake the word, *Lazarus, come forth*.

How often do the clouds of heaven drop upon men, yet they still remain as a dry chip ! their stony hearts perhaps moistened with some transient flashy affections, but not mollified into flesh. Pray therefore to God, before the use of any means. Lord, breathe life so powerfully upon me, that I may walk before thee, and never find myself again in a natural winding-sheet ; let thy voice, Lord, be heard, and felt by me as the voice of thy Son was by Lazarus. To use means without a seeking to God for his blessing, is to be exercised in divine institutions with an atheistical spirit : he is an atheist that expects nourishment from his meat without God's benediction ; and he no less that runs to means, without lifting up his heart to God, thinking to get grace conveyed by the means without God's operation.

2. Plead much with God from the glorious *attributes he honours in this work*. Lord, here is a subject for thy power to work upon. God made the heavens when there was nothing but a rude mass ; he brought forth the sun, moon, and stars, with all their glory, out of the barren womb of nothing. Is thy heart worse than nothing, more contradictory to God than nothing ? It is so, assume an argument from hence : Lord, here is a subject for thy power above what was manifested in creation ; there is not a more tough heart in the world than mine ; lose not the opportunity of displaying the greatness of thy power, since there is scarce a heart more stout and unwieldy than mine is ; Lord, bestow a vital principle upon me ; thou didst it to the lifeless body of Adam ; thy power will be more magnified in the breathing upon a lifeless soul of a son and daughter of Adam. In the same manner plead his wisdom and holiness. Plead also the enmity thy sin hath against him, the wrong it hath done him, in spoiling the creation, changing the end of it, hindering thee from thy natural duty ; and that it

is not for the interest of his glory to let sin bear such a sway and dominion, and usurp his room in one who would fain be another man.

3. Be deeply sensible of the corruption of thy nature ; the want of this is the cause there is so little sense in men and women of the absolute necessity of the grace of regeneration, and a change of nature. Therefore labour to see yourselves in a forlorn condition by spiritual death. Look upon your great fall, as a son of Adam, a slave of Satan, and possessor of a hellish nature, at a vast distance from God and happiness.

4. *Grieve not the Spirit* in any of his operations. Quench not the sparks of the Spirit in any previous preparations and dispositions to this new birth. Be pliable to his breathings ; hoist up your sails to receive his gales ; when he knocks, open thy heart as wide as may be, push it to the furthest point, that there may be no remora ; let all the house be free for his triumphant entrance ; since thy strength is too weak for it, beg of him at such a season to break it open ; set upon prayer at such a season, and leave not till you have prayed your spirits up, and your resistance out. How ungrateful and foolish is it to grieve that Spirit, who offers to form you into a new birth, and bring the life and joy of heaven into your heart ! This is the only means to recover the loss you had by the fall of Adam, and surmount all the misery of it. Seek to him ; he that can gather the dust of your bodies if blown to the further part of the world, and knit it together, can overcome the deadly noisomeness of your souls ; he can make a barren wilderness to become pools of water ; a lump of vanity, a garden of pleasure ; a heap of rubbish to sprout up a new born sun.* If you would therefore be animated with a Spirit of life, you must approach the beams of the sun, and lie under the rich and enlivening influences of it.

* Ἐγγίσας τῷ ἀκτῖνι τῆς θεότητος. Basil.

THE
INSTRUMENT
OF
REGENERATION.

James 1. 18.

OF HIS OWN WILL BEGAT HE US, WITH THE WORD OF TRUTH, THAT WE SHOULD BE A KIND OF FIRST FRUITS OF HIS CREATURES.

PART I.

THE GOSPEL THE INSTRUMENT OF REGENERATION.

Introduction—Explication of the text—The scriptures distinguish the efficient and instrumental cause—The law not the instrument of regeneration—The gospel is this instrument—Not a natural instrument—It is the only instrument—The necessity of it—A standing instrument to the end of the world—It eminently glorifies God—The word of God works objectively—Shews man his misery—The necessity and existence of another foundation—Its force upon the will.

I HAVE chosen this text to treat of the instrument of the new birth.

The apostle having advised them, ver. 13, not to charge God as the author of any temptation to evil,

showing it to be contrary to the nature of God, who is infinite goodness and righteousness ; for as he cannot be tempted with evil, so neither can he tempt any man ; and declaring the true cause and spring of all evil to be inherent in ourselves, even that lust which is riveted in our nature, which he calls our own lust ; *But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed*, ver. 14. He takes occasion from thence to shew the order of sin's working ; sin is first conceived by that original corruption in our nature, and formed and brought forth into action ; and when it is finished, and grows into a habit, it *brings forth death*, ver. 15. To remove this error, which some in those days had sucked in out of a natural self-love that man hath to excuse himself, and remove the cause of sin far from him ; the apostle shows that God is the author and fountain of all the good we have ; *Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, nor shadow of change*, ver. 17. God being the infinite Father of lights, who hath no eclipses or decreases, no shadows or mixtures of darkness, but always shines with a constant and settled brightness ; of this goodness hath given a great evidence in conferring the choicest mercy upon us, even a new begetting through the gospel, and thereby the relation of children to him, that we might be consecrated to him as the first fruits and a peculiar portion. *Of his own will*, βεληθεις, by his mere motion, induced by no cause but the goodness in his own breast.

(1.) To distinguish it from the generation of the Son, which is natural, this voluntary ; of his own will, not naturally, as he begat his Son from eternity.

(2.) Not necessarily, by a necessity of nature, as the sun, to which he had compared God before, doth enlighten, and enliven, when matter is prepared to receive his quickening beams ; but by an arbitrariness of grace.

(3.) Not by any obligation from the creature : the

will of God is opposed to the merit of man. The new creation answers to election; the first purpose was free, the bringing that purpose to execution is free; whatsoever obligation there is, results not from the creature, but from himself, his own immutable nature which hath no variableness, nor shadow of change. Begat us ἀπεκύησεν, or brought us forth; for the same word ἀποκύει, ver. 15, is translated, *brings forth*. By *the word of truth*, a title given to the gospel both in the Old and New Testament. In the Old, *Psal.* 45. 4, *And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, or * upon thy word of truth*. In the New Testament, *In whom you also trusted after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, Eph.* 1. 13. So *2 Cor.* 6. 7, and *2 Tim.* 2. 15.

And it is called *truth* by way of excellency, as paramount to all other truth, 1. Either, by an Hebraism, the word of truth; that is, the true word; 2. Or rather, by way of eminency, as containing a higher truth, more excellent in itself, more advantageous for the creature, than any other divine truth; wherein the highest glory of God, the sure and everlasting happiness of the creature is set forth; a word which he hath *magnified above all his name, Psal.* 138. 2.

And it is called the *word* of truth,

1. In regard of the author, truth itself; and the publisher, he who was the way, the truth, and the life.

2. In opposition to all *false* doctrines, which can never be the instruments of conversion; for error to convert to truth, is the same thing as for darkness to diffuse light, or water to kindle fire.

3. In opposition to the *windy and flashy conceits* of men, which can no more be instrumental in the begetting a christian, than mere wind can beget a man.

4. In opposition to the *legal shadows*; the gospel declares the truth of those types. Both the law and

prophecy were but as a dim candle *in a dark place*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 19, but this as a sun shining out at noon-day. All other discourses did stream to this as their great ocean, wherein they were to be swallowed up. The law was the word of truth, but referred to the gospel as the great end of it. This contains the whole and ultimate purpose of God, for saving men by Jesus Christ, and in him enriching them with all spiritual blessings ; and not by the works of the law ; and thus the Spirit which enlightens and seals instruction upon our souls, is called *the spirit of truth*, *John* 14. 17, as it is called a spirit of holiness, as it makes us holy ; a spirit of grace, as it makes us gracious ; or as it declares the grace of God.

Some by *the word of truth* understand *Christ*, the essential and uncreated λόγος Word, as it is understood by some ; *By the word of God, which lives and abides for ever ; and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 23, 25. Possibly it may be meant of Christ, who by the gospel is declared and preached to be the Mediator between God and man, appointed to raise up those that are given to him. Others by the word there, mean the will of God of giving grace in Christ which is manifest in, and expressed in the gospel.

But here it is evidently meant of the *gospel*, because of the inference the apostle makes, *Be swift to hear*, ver. 19 ; that is, prize the word, wait upon the means with all readiness ; *slow to speak*, to utter your judgment of it, or be wise in your own conceit, whereof a readiness to speak peremptorily in divine truth is sometimes an evidence ; slow to wrath and passion, which hinder any profit by the word. *That we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures ;* the chief among his creatures ; the first fruits were the best of every kind to be offered to God, whereby they acknowledged God's gift of them, and desired his blessing upon them, and were given as God's peculiar right and portion. It was commanded in the law, *Deut.*

18. 4. It was a custom among many of the heathens ; to offer them, was a token of thankfulness ; not to offer them was accounted a sign of atheism and profaneness.* The new creature is God's peculiar portion taken out of mankind ; and it bespeaks duty too : being consecrated to God by a new begetting, they should serve God with a new spirit, new thankfulness, new frames.

We see here, 1. The efficient of regeneration, God : He, the Father of lights. 2. The impulsive or moving cause, his own will. 3. The instrumental cause, with the word of truth. 4. The final cause : that we may be a kind of first-fruits.

The doctrine I am to handle is, that the gospel is the *instrument whereby God brings the soul forth in a new birth.*

The scripture distinguishes the *efficient* and *instrumental* cause, by the preposition *ἐν* or *ἐν* and *διὰ*. When we are said to be *born of the Spirit*, it is 1 John 5. 5, *ἐν ὡνδίματος*, 1 John 3. 9, *ἐν Θεῷ*, 1 John 5. 1, never *διὰ ὡνδίματος*, or *διὰ Θεῷ* ; but we are nowhere said to be born of the word, or begotten of the word, but *διὰ λόγου* by or with the word, 1 Pet. 1. 23, and *διὰ ἐναγγελίᾳ*, 1 Cor. 4. 15. I have begotten you *through the gospel* ; the preposition *ἐν* or *ἐν*, usually notes the efficient or material cause ; *διὰ*, the instrumental or means by which a thing is wrought. Sin entered into the heart of Eve by the word of the devil ; grace enters into the heart by the word of God ; that entered by a word of error, this by a word of truth ; *Ye are clean through the word I have spoken to you*, John 15. 3, whereby our Saviour means the word outwardly preached by him, for it is the word spoken by him. Not that it had this efficacy of itself, but as an instrument of their sanctification, rendering them ready to every good work.

The holiness therefore, which it begets, is called.

* Apuleii Apolog. p. 291.

the holiness of truth, *Eph.* 4. 24, opposed to the ἐπιθυμίαι τῆς ἀπάτης, *lusts of deceit*, ver. 22. Lusts grow up from error and deceit; and holiness in the new man grows up from truth. The gospel-administration, in regard of the effect of it, is called the *kingdom of God*, *Mark* 1. 14, it erects the kingdom of God in the world, and in the hearts of men; and called the regeneration; *Ye which have followed me in the regeneration*, *Matt.* 19. 28: the gospel administration being a creating of *new heavens, and a new earth*, *Isa.* 65. 17. This is the triumphal chariot, wherein Christ rides majestically to the conquest of hearts. *And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth*, *Psal.* 45. 4.* A Psalm the Jews themselves understand of the Messiah. The word of his truth is the support of his kingdom, whereby he awes sinners into submission. Peace from heaven, and the health of our nature, is the *fruit of the lips*, though of God's creation, *Isa.* 57. 19. It is like the dew or mist which watered the ground, and prepared the earth for the reformation of Adam's body, into which God breathed afterwards a *living soul*, *Gen.* 2. 6, 7.

I. For explication of this doctrine, take some propositions.

1. It is not the *law* that is this instrument. The law taken in general for the legal administration prescribed to the Jews, was instrumental for renewing, because there was a typical gospel in that judaical administration. *For to us was the gospel preached as well as unto them*, *Heb.* 4. 2;† they were evangelized, as the words signifies: the judaical administration was compounded of law and gospel; the moral law, as a covenant of works; the ceremonial law, representing the covenant of grace. The law of God, or gospel among them, is said to *convert the soul*, *Psal.* 19. 7. But the law, taken as a covenant of works, was not appointed for renewing the soul; otherwise what need

had there been of enacting another law for that work?*

And those that say, the law is instrumental in conversion, or inflaming our affections to obedience, say, that all the benefits by it are to be ascribed to the covenant of grace in Christ.

It is true, the law considered in itself is preparatory to cast men down, and show them their distance from God, and contrariety to his command: but the law without the gospel never brought any man to Christ. Whatsoever it does in this case, is not of itself, but by the mingling the gospel with it, which spirits it to such an end. Though the law did not encourage sin, yet it gave no help against it, but left the soul under the dominion of it, which is evident by the apostle's inference. *Sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace, Rom. 6. 14;* hence the property of the law, which is meant by the letter, *2 Cor. 3. 6*, is to kill, but the Spirit gives life; that leaves under the severity of justice, after sin had entered; but the spiritual administration, wherein the Spirit works, is to quicken and renew the soul, and make it able to get above the guilt and power of sin. The apostle therefore wholly excludes the law. *Received you the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Gal. 3. 2.* That is, the word of faith, as the gospel is called, *Rom. 10. 8.*

By Spirit is meant, saith Calvin, the grace of regeneration, as by faith is meant the doctrine of faith. I might have preached (as if the apostle had said) the works of the law till my lungs had been worn out, and the renewing Spirit would never have entered into you by that fire, but it descended upon you in sweet gospel-dew. The gospel is therefore called *the ministration of the Spirit*, and *the ministration of righteousness*, *2 Cor. 3. 8, 9.* It is the chariot, or *vehiculum*, wherein the Spirit rides, the proclamation by which it

* *Burges, vindiciæ Legis. p. 202.*

is declared, the channel through which it is conveyed.

The law discovers the righteousness of God, as well as the gospel; but that demands a righteousness from the creature, the gospel confers a righteousness upon the creature; the law shows us God's righteousness in his nature, the gospel shows us God's righteousness in his nature, and grace. The law is a hammer to break us, the gospel God's oil to cure us; the law makes sin live and our souls die. *When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died, Rom, 7. 9*; the gospel makes sin die and our souls live. The law awakens the lion, the gospel lets out his blood. At the best, the terrors of the law do chain up our furious affections, but the sweetness of gospel-mercy changeth them. The law prepares the matter, the gospel brings the new form.

That was appointed for the rule of our walk, not for the restoration of our life. And they are the promises of mercy which are the motives to return; rebels will not submit to their prince, as long as they know they shall have no quarter.* Hue and cry makes the thief fly away the faster. By the *great and precious promises we are made partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. 1. 4*. The promises of the law being conditional, belong not to us without fulfilling the condition, of which we are incapable of ourselves. The law therefore since the fall is destructive, the gospel restorative, and the promises of it, the cords whereby God draws us.

2. The *gospel* is this instrument. It is an instrument to unlock the prison doors, and take them off the hinges; strike off the fetters, and draw out the soul to a glorious liberty. It is by the voice of the archangel men shall rise in their bodies: it is by the voice of the Son of God in the word, that men rise in their souls. Nothing else ever wrought such mira-

* Dr. Preston.

culous changes; to make lions become lambs, *Isa.* 11. 6. *Hos.* 4. 13, beloved idols to 'be cast away with indignation; to make its entrance like fire, and consume old lusts in a short time'; these have been undeniable realities, which have created both affection and astonishment in some enemies as well as friends. It hath a more excellent instrumentality in it, than other providences of God, because it is a higher manifestation. Every creature conducts us to the knowledge of God, by giving us notice of his power, wisdom, and goodness, *Rom.* 1. 20.

The declaration of his *works* in the world, is instrumental to make men seek him, *Acts* 17. 27. Every day's providence declares his patience; every shower of rain his merciful provision for mankind, *Acts* 14. 17; every day's preservation of the world under a load of sin, manifests his mercy. The heavens have a tongue, and the rod has a voice; the design of all is to *lead men to repentance*, *Rom.* 2. 4. If these therefore be some kind of instruments upon the hearts of considering men, the gospel being a discovery superior to all these, in manifesting not only a God of nature, but a God of grace, must be designed to a choicer and nobler work: the heavens and providences are instruments to instruct us, *this* to renew us.

First. The gospel is an instrument; but it is not a *natural* instrument, to work by any natural efficacy; as food nourishes, the sun shines, or the air and water cools, or as a sharp knife cuts if it be applied to fit matter. If it were thus natural, it would not be of grace: though the shining of the sun, or the healing of diseases are acts of the goodness and mercy in God, yet the scripture calls them not by that higher title of acts of grace. If the operation were natural, the gospel would never be without its effect where-soever it were preached; as the sun, wheresoever it shines in any land, both enlightens and warms. Our Saviour then would have had more success, since the

gospel could not have greater natural efficacy than from his lips ; yet the number of his converts were probably not much *above five hundred*, 1 Cor. 15. 6, for so many he appeared to after his resurrection, when many thousands in that land heard his voice and saw his miracles. Christ, who was always able to give himself success, would not ; perhaps for this among many other reasons, to advance his spiritual above his corporeal presence ; and to prevent any thoughts of any natural virtue in the word, without the power of the Spirit working by it.

Every day teaches us, that though many see the glass of the gospel, yet few see the glory of God in that gospel. Were it natural, then that all that hear it were not renewed would be more miraculous than that any are ; as it was more a miracle that the sun should stand still in Joshua's time, against its natural course of motion, than that it moves every day in the heavens. * If it were a natural instrument, it must then have life in itself ; but how can the voice of a man, or the words and syllables in a book, be capable of receiving spiritual life, which they must have before they can naturally convey it to others ? Were it a natural instrument, it would have the same effect upon the soul at one time, as at another.

But does not daily experience witness, that the word shines at some particular times upon the soul with a clearer ray than at other times, that such a soul hath thought itself in another world, as it were, and that too when it hath been much clouded by the weakness of the instrument declaring it ? Lastly, Were it natural, the wisest men of the sharpest understandings, could not resist it ; no man can hinder the sun's shining upon him, when he is under the beams of it ; it would warm him whether he would or not : yet have not such been the most desperate opposers of it in all ages of the world, as well as in the times

* Vid. Baxt. Rest, part 9. p. 160.

of the apostles? It is not then a natural, but a moral instrument; which will follow afterwards, when we come to consider how it works.

Secondly. The gospel is the *only* instrument appointed by God to this end in an ordinary way. God hath made a combination between hearing and believing, *Rom.* 10. 14, 17; so that believing comes not without hearing. The waters of the sanctuary run only through the channels of the gospel; the mines of grace are found only in the climates of the word. Why does not air nourish? Because God did not set that, but meat, apart for such an end: though God could, by his almighty power, bless air to this end, yet in an ordinary way he hath fixed his blessing on these natural causes of his own ordaining. God has appointed second causes for natural operations; if we would be warm, God has appointed fire and sun to warm us; he could do it immediately, by spreading a lively heat in every member, as well as he gave at first a power to fire to burn; but he uses natural instruments in natural effects, and likewise spiritual instruments in spiritual productions.

God may flow in an extraordinary way upon the soul by a divine influence, without any instrument. as he did immediately upon the prophets, or as he gave light to the world the three first days of the creation without a sun, but since only by the sun and stars: but God seems here to have fixed his power; *The gospel is the power of God to salvation, Rom.* 1. 16; not that his power shall always attend it, but that he will exert his power, at least ordinarily, only by it; no other organ through which the wind of the Spirit shall blow, no other sword which the Spirit shall manage, but this, *Eph.* 6. 13. Though our Saviour prayed upon the cross, for some of his greatest enemies who had their hands enbrued in his precious blood, though he was heard, yet his prayer was not answered but through Peter's ministry, to grace the first spiritual discovery of the gospel. Nothing

else can have that efficacy. Had every man in Israel made a brazen serpent, and looked upon it when they had been stung, they might have looked till they had groaned their last, before they had met with any cure, because only one was of God's appointing: to a cast of an eye upon that, he had only promised his healing virtue; in that only then he had lodged his power.

Thirdly. The gospel is therefore a *necessary* instrument,

1. In regard of the reasonable creature there must be some declaration. * God does not ordinarily work but by means, and does not produce any thing without them which may be done with them. God does not maintain the creatures by a daily creation, but by generation; he maintains that faculty of generation in them by the means of health and nourishment, and that by the means of the fruits of the earth, and does all this according to the ordinance he fixed at the creation, when he appointed every kind of creatures their proper food, and bestowed his blessing upon them, *Increase and multiply*. So according to the method God hath set of men's actions, it is necessary that this regeneration should be by some word as an instrument: for God hath given understanding and will to man; we cannot understand any thing, or will any thing, but what is proposed to us by some external object; as our eye can see nothing but what is without us, our hand take nothing but what is without us: so it is necessary that God by the word should set before us those things which our understandings may apprehend, and our wills embrace.

Now we believe things as we conceive them true, or not believe them as we conceive them false: we love, desire, delight in things, as we conceive them honest or profitable; we hate, we refuse, or grieve, as we conceive them dishonest, or troublesome, or hurtful to us: whatever we are changed by in our

* Amiraunt. Serm. sur. 2. Phil. 12, p. 68, 19, &c.

understandings, wills, and affections, is represented to us under some of these considerations. To make an alteration in us according to our nature of understanding, will, and affection, it is necessary there should be some declaration of things under those considerations of true, good, delightful, &c. in the highest manner, to make a choice change in every faculty of the soul; and without this a man cannot be changed as a rational creature; he will otherwise have a change he knows not why, nor to what end, nor upon what consideration, which is an inconceivable change in a rational creature.

2. It is necessary the revelation of this gospel should be made. There is a necessity of some revelation; for no man can see that which is not visible, or hear that which hath no sound, or know that which is not declared. There is also a necessity of the revelation of this gospel, since faith is a great part of this work. How can any man believe that God is good in Christ, without knowing that he hath so declared himself? Since the Spirit takes of Christ's, and shows it to us; there must be a revelation of Christ, and the goodness of God in Christ, before we can believe. Though the manner of this revelation may be different, and the Spirit may renew in an extraordinary manner; yet this is the instrument whereby all spiritual operations are wrought; the manner may be by visions, dreams, by reading or hearing, yet still it is the gospel which is revealed; the matter revealed is the same, though the formal revelation, or manner, may be different. Paul's regeneration was by a vision; for at that vision of the light, and that voice of Christ, I suppose him to be renewed, because of that full resignation of his *will to Christ*, *Acts 9. 6*; yet the matter of the revelation was the same, that Christ was the Messiah; for so Paul understands it, in giving him the title of Lord. Though God may communicate himself without the written word, to some that have it not, yet according

to his appointment not without a revelation of what is in that word.

3. This necessity will further appear, if we consider that it always was so. Adam and Eve were the first after the fall, wherein God constitutes his church, whose regeneration and conversion were wrought by that promise of the seed of the woman, made to them in paradise, God surely putting an enmity in the heart of those to whom this first promise of an enmity was made; upon which promise a sacrifice followed, which some ground on *Gen. 3. 21, God made them coats of skins* of beasts, which the word *וּבָרָא* signifies, and is never taken in scripture otherwise than for the outward skin of a beast. * And indeed it is not likely that one hundred and twenty-nine years should be between the promise and the first sacrifice; for some think Abel was killed by Cain in the hundred and twenty-ninth year after the creation: for it is certain one hundred and thirty years after the creation Seth was born, *Gen. 5. 3*. And this is confirmed, *Neither the first testament was dedicated without blood, Heb. 9. 32*. The first testament was of a more ancient date than the Jewish service ordained by Moses; and some ceremonies, as sacrifices, and distinction of clean and unclean beasts, were in use before, *Gen. 8. 20*; so that there seems to be a sacrifice representing the Messiah, for the dedication of the first testament, which Adam had received from God, and transmitted to Abel, whom he taught the way of sacrificing.

What regeneration Adam had, was by this word of the gospel; had not Adam believed it, he would not have delivered it to Abel; and Abel had not sacrificed, unless he had been taught so by his father, or immediately by God; but most likely by his father, because God does not use extraordinary means, when ordinary will serve. And Abel was regenerate; for

* Cloppenburgh. de sacrific. p. 13.

it is said, *by faith he offered this sacrifice, Heb. 11. 4*; and it was faith in Christ, faith in the promised seed; for all of them in that catalogue, *Heb. 11*, eyed Christ by faith, as well as Moses, of whom it is particularly expressed, *that he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, ver. 26.*

Considering all this, it is evident, that the ancient restoration was by the revelation of Christ and the gospel, as the only necessary means. Abraham, it is likely, had some external word in his father Terali's family, by tradition from the patriarchs; and had the revelation of the promise made to him by God, *Gen. 18. 19.* And it was wrought then in an ordinary way, by instruction; for, for that Abraham is commended, and no doubt but Isaac and Jacob did the same; so that all along this change of the heart was wrought by a declaration of the word of the gospel.

4. It is necessary by God's appointment for *all the degrees of the new birth*, and all the *appendixes* to it. When God shows his own glory for a further change, he represents the species of it in the glass of the gospel; *Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, 2 Cor. 3. 18.* It is the ministration of the Spirit in all the acts of the Spirit. If the Spirit quickens, it is by some gospel precept; if it comforts, it is by some gospel promise; if it startles, it is by some threatening in the word; whatsoever working there is in a christian's heart, it is by some word or other dropping upon it. If any temptation which assaults us, be baffled, it is by the word, which is *the sword of the Spirit.*

The life of a christian is made up of increasing light, refreshing comforts, choicer inclinations of the heart towards God; by the same law whereby the soul is converted, the heart is rejoiced, and the eyes further enlightened; *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul, making wise the simple, rejoicing the heart, enlightening the eyes, Psal. 19. 7, 8.* The

Spirit makes the word not only the fire to kindle the soul, but the bellows to blow; it is first life, then liveliness to the soul, it is through the word he begets us, and through the word he quickens us; *Thy word hath quickened me*, *Psa.* 119. 50, 93. It is by the word God gathers a church in the world, by the same word he sanctifies it to greater degrees, *Eph.* 5. 26. It is the seed whereby we are born, the dew whereby we are refreshed. As it is the seed of our birth, so it is the *milk of our growth*, *1 Pet.* 2. 2. Faith comes by hearing, and salvation after faith by the *joolishness of preaching*, *1 Cor.* 1. 21. It helps us after we have believed through grace, *Acts* 18. 27. Our fruitfulness depends upon our plantation by this river's side.

The influence of other ordinances depends upon it. * Sacraments that nourish and increase, are not efficacious, but by virtue of the word; they have their dependance on the word, as seals upon the covenant; the word is operative without sacraments, sacraments are not operative without the influence of the word, they are only assistants to it. This quickens and increases habitual grace, as well as it was the instrument first to usher it into the heart; *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word*, *Eph.* 5. 26. As God will have the mediation of his Son honoured in the whole progress and perfection of grace as the meritorious cause, the efficacy of the Spirit as the efficient cause, so he will have the word in every step to be even honoured as the instrumental cause; that as Jesus Christ is all in all, as the chief, so the word may be all in all as the means. As God created the world by the word of his power, and by the word of his providence bid the creatures increase and multiply, so by the word of the gospel he lays the foundation and rears the building of his spiritual house.

* Blake's Covenant Scaled, p. 213.

Fourthly. It seems to be the *standing* instrument of it to the end of the world. Some indeed think the conversion of the Jews shall not be by the declarations of the word in a way of preaching and instruction, as the Gentiles were brought in, but by a visible appearance of Christ, which they ground upon, *They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, Zach. 12. 10*; they shall see Christ in the clouds as pierced by them; and understand Paul's conversion by an extraordinary light shining round about him, and a voice from heaven, to be a type and pattern of God's manner of the future conversion of the Jews, which is intimated, that the mercy he obtained was *a pattern for them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting, 1 Tim. 1. 16.* Whether this be so or not, yet however the conversion is by a revelation of that which is the matter and substance of the gospel, it is the revelation of Christ himself; and if, like Paul's conversion, by a voice, as well as by sight; by instruction as well as apparition.

But it seems to me to be the perpetual standing means of regeneration. The fruits of our Saviour's ascension shall endure to the end of the world; and the enduing men with gifts for the building him a spiritual house, is a great end of his ascension. *Psa. 68. 18,* compared with *Eph. 4. 8, 9. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive, thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.* He receives gifts upon his ascension, for the subduing and changing the hearts of the rebellious, that they may be a fit habitation for God, who dwells in them by his Spirit; these gifts being the fruit of so glorious an ascension, and a rich donative to him for the accomplishment of his undertaking in the world, and being given for the smoothing, polishing, and fitting rude stones to combine together for a temple for the Lord to dwell in, which is the reason why he keeps up the world: as long therefore as God hath a temple,

and any stone to polish, these gifts will remain in the ministry of the word, and be exercised in order to so great a building; and we may infer also by the way, that it is not likely that God dwells in any, but such who are so subdued and formed by the ministry of the word, which is the fruit of Christ's ascension.

It seems also to have a more ancient date, and founded upon the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son. All that prayer in the 17th of *John*, seems to me to run upon those articles agreed on between them. Those that were given to Christ, were given to keep his word; *Thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word, John 17. 6.* Which word was given to Christ by God in order to be given to them; *I have given them the word which thou gavest me, ver. 8.* And in his prayer for their sanctification, ver. 17, he seems to intimate that this was the ordinary method then subscribed to by both, and the settled means of sanctification; he does not only propose his desire for their sanctification, but the means, *through thy truth*, and specifies what he means by truth, *thy word is truth*. And what he did here pray for, for them that were then with him, he did for all that should hereafter *believe*, ver. 20; and though this be meant of a further sanctification of those that were already regenerate, yet it will I think evidently follow, that if the word by agreement between the Father and the Son, be the instrument of every degree of sanctification, it must be also of the first; since there can be no faith, but refers to the object believed, and the ground why it is believed; *Whence belief of the truth is joined with the sanctification of the spirit, 2 Thess. 2. 13,* besides, all belief for the future was to be through the word; *Through their word, ver. 20.*

Let me add another inference from this; what an excellent argument is this to plead in prayer, before you go to hear or read the word: Lord, was not this

an article of agreement between thee and thy Son? was not this the desire of our Saviour, who knew the best means of sanctifying?

Fifthly. As it is not a natural instrument, but the only instrument appointed by God, and therefore, upon these, and upon other accounts, a necessary instrument; so it is an instrument, which makes mightily for *God's glory*. The meaner the appearance of the instrument, the more evident the power and skill of the workman. It would be miraculous for a man to raise up another from death, by a composition of medicines applied to the mouth, but a greater miracle to raise him by speaking a word. In the new birth there is nothing sensible to man but the word, the other causes are secret, like the wind, you know not whence it comes, nor whither it goes. The instrument being weak in itself, none can claim any share with God in the glory of the work. But were there a natural strength in the means, much of the honour would be pared from God, and assumed by the creature.

It is like the trumpet in the right hand of Gideon's soldiers, and a pitcher with a lamp in the left, upon the blowing of the trumpet and the breaking the pitcher, the enemies fled, and God would have the means but small, but three hundred of three hundred and twenty thousand, that Israel might not vaunt, and say, Mine own arm hath saved me, *Judg.* 7. 2. It had not been admirable for Sampson to have killed so many with a sword or spear, or if the walls of Jericho had fallen flat by the force of some battering engine; but it was wonderful to see them tumble at the blast of rams' horns. Is it not the same to see strong holds, high thoughts, Goliath-like corruptions, and spiritual death itself fly before the voice of the word?

To see a man, like the Babel builders, swelling and rearing up his own confidences against God, to have all the former language of his soul confounded by a word; to think of other objects, speak in another

strain, decend from self to dust, deny pleasure, embrace a crucified Christ; that carnal reason should be silenced, legions of devils driven out, a massy Dagon fall before an ark of wood, that hath nothing in it but the rod of Aaron, and the pot of manna; in such weak means is the power of God exalted, and no other cry can reasonably be heard, but *This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.*

So it was more glorious for our Saviour to turn many of the Jews to him after his death, than in his life, to bring them to believe by a word, upon a person they had crucified as a malefactor, than if he had brought them to believe, while he was attended with a train of miracles; the power of his miracles might seem in their eyes to be extinct with his death, since he that delivered others, did not deliver himself from the hands of his murderers; he now honours both his own word and their faith, in bringing them to believe by the preaching of men, who did not believe by the word from his lips, attended with the seals of so many glorious miracles.

Sixthly. As it is an instrument, so it is but an instrument. God begets by the word, the chief operation depends upon the Spirit of God. No sword can cut without a hand to manage it, no engine batter without a force to drive it. The word is objective in itself, operative by the power of the Spirit; instrumental in itself, efficacious by the Holy Ghost. The word of Christ is first spirit, and then life; *The words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are life, John 6. 63.* The word is the chariot of the Spirit, the Spirit the guider of the word; there is a gospel comes in word, and there is a gospel comes in power, *1 Thes. 1. 5.* There is a publishing of the gospel, and there is the *fulness of the blessing of the gospel, Rom. 15. 29.* There was the truth of God spoken by Peter and Paul, and God in that truth, working in the heart: *He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship*

of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles, Gal. 2. 8.

The gospel in itself is like Christ's voice ; the gospel with the Spirit, is like Christ's power raising Lazarus ; other men might have spoke the same words, but the power of rising must come down from above. It is then successful when an inward unction drops with the outward dew, when the veil is taken from the heart, and the curtain from the word, and both meet together, both word and heart ; when Christ kisseth with the kisses of his mouth, and the man embraceth it with the affections of his heart. The light in the air is the instrument by which we read, but the principle of that light is in the sun, in the heavens. The word is a rod, a breath, but efficacious in smiting and slaying the old man, as it is the *rod of Christ's mouth, the breath of his lips, Isa. 11. 3.* A rod like that of Moses, to charm us, but as it is the *rod of his strength, Psal. 110. 2.* A weapon, but only *mighty through God, 2 Cor. 10. 4.*

A seed, but brings not forth a plant, only by the influence of the sun. The word hath this efficacy from the bleeding wounds and dying groans of Christ ; it is by his making his soul an offering for sin, that he sees the travail of his soul in his new-born creatures ; by his blood are all the promises of grace confirmed ; by his blood they are operative. The word whereby we are begotten, was appointed by God, confirmed by Christ, and the Spirit which begets us, was purchased by the same blood. To conclude, the word declares Christ, and the Spirit excites the heart to accept him. The word shows his excellency, and the Spirit stirs up strong cries after him. The word declares the promises, and the Spirit helps us to plead them. The word administers reasons against our reasonings, and the Spirit enforces them. The word shews the way ; and the Spirit enables to walk in it. The word is the seed of the Spirit, and the Spirit the quickener of the word. The word is the graft, and the

Spirit the engrafter : the word is the pool of water, and the Spirit stirs it to make it healing.

How the word works in regeneration.

1. *Objectively* ; as it is a declaration of God's will. As it proposes to the understanding what is to be known in order to salvation hereafter, and practice here ; as it declares the purpose of God to save only by Jesus Christ the Mediator, and by him to deliver us from sin, Satan, and whatsoever is contrary to everlasting happiness ; and thus is significative of something to our minds and understandings. The Spirit gives us an eye to see, and the word is the light which discovers the object to the eye. The Spirit gives us an organ, but something must be proposed for that organ to exercise itself about, otherwise there is no use of the understanding in any rational operation, which certainly there is ; for though the object is supernatural, and the inward work upon the mind supernatural, yet the proposal of the object to the mind is made in a rational manner. The word objectively proposes life and death, in a way suitable to the nature of man, that he may rationally chuse life ; *I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing, therefore chuse life, Deut. 30. 19* ; both the blessings of the gospel, and the curses of the law, are presented in the word, that the one may be chosen, the other avoided.

The word is proposed under various notions ; as *true*, and so it is the object of the speculative understanding ; as *good*, as it is the object of the practical understanding and will ; as *profitable*, so it is the object of the appetite and affections ; when it is received into the speculative understanding, it is a preparation to the new birth ; when it is received into the practical understanding and will, it is the new birth. It discovers the wonders in God's own heart, his Son, and his promise ; the Spirit demonstrates it, and gives power to embrace it ; it first presents the promise, and then answers the pleas the stubborn heart makes

against it, yet by the same gospel ; it fetches demonstrative arguments from that quiver to satisfy a cavilling understanding, and motives from thence to overcome a resisting will ; it silences the fears, points to the way, excites the soul to an acceptance of Christ, all by this gospel ; and so draws us, as a man draws a child, by presenting some alluring object to him : the Spirit immediately himself, touches the soul, but by word, as an instrument proposing the object, and drawing out the soul into an actual believing.

The two chief parts of the word are, 1. the discovery of our *misery by nature*. The heart is opened, our putrified condition in our own blood evidenced, our deplorable state unfolded, and thereby the conscience awakened to sensible reflections ; it dissects the heart, discovers the secret reserves, unravels the thoughts, pursues sin to its fastnesses, and brings it out, as Joshua the kings to execution ; *And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest, and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth, 1 Cor. 14. 25.* It opens sin to the very secrets, discovers the inward impurity, takes off its beautiful disguise, its silken covering, and shows the odiousness that lies concealed under it. It discovers the forlorn state by nature, and the insufficiency of flesh and blood to inherit the kingdom of God. Let the word be whispered by the Spirit in the ears of a ruffling sinner, and the curtains which obscured his sin from his eye, drawn open, that he may see what a nest of infernal evils behind, what astonishment will it raise in him ! how will he stand amazed at his own folly ! how will he loathe that self which before he so vehemently loved !

A second discovery is of the necessity and existence of another foundation. It discovers our misery by nature, and our remedy by Christ ; the plague, brought upon the world by the first Adam, the cure brought to the world by the second. It proclaims a peace concluded between God and the humbled sinner by

his Son the great ambassador, confirmed by his blood, assured by his resurrection. It shows him the fountain of death in his sin, the fountain of life in Christ, the free streams and gracious communications of it. The promise discovers the gracious nature of God, his kindness to man, the openness of his arms to receive him; and thus brings the soul off from itself to the foot of God, and of the cross.

When the word, like fire, and the heart, like tinder, come close together, the heart catches the spark and burns. From the word, reconciliation and peace step out, and meet the soul, it finds the power of the love of Christ inspiring it with life, the treasure of the gospel promises open, the window of the gospel-ark opened, and the dove flying out of it into the desert heart. The word proposes things as they are in reality, and the *soul knows things as it ought to know*, 1 Cor. 8. 2. It understands the unavoidable necessity, and the infallible excellency of the things proposed. It sees the rocks and shelves wherein the danger lies, and a compass whereby to steer, a road wherein to lie safe at anchor; whereupon he relents for his sin, is astonished at divine kindness, rejoices at the promise, as before he trembled at the threatening, and hath far other thoughts of God than he had before: in which act divine life is breathed into the soul.

2. The word seems to have an active force upon the *will*, though the manner of it be *very hard to conceive*. It is operative in the hand of God for sanctification: the petition of our Saviour, *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth*, John 17. 17, seems to intimate more than a bare objective relation to this work; it both shows our spots, and cleaves them. It is a seed: seed, though small is active; no part of the plant retains a greater efficacy; all the glory and strength of the plant in its buds, blossoms, and fruit, are hidden in it: the word is this seed, which being settled in the heart, by the power of the Spirit,

brings forth this new creature. It is a glass, that not only represents the image of God, but *by the Spirit changeth us into it*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. *A sword that pierceth the heart, yea, sharper than a two-edged sword, dividing asunder the soul and spirit*, Heb. 4. 12 ; it is a fire to burn. The Spirit so enforces the word, that it cuts to the quick, discerns the very thoughts, insinuates into the depths of the heart, and rakes up the small sands from the bottom, as a fierce wind from the bowels of the sea. It is God's ordinance to batter down strong holds ; though it be not a natural instrument to work necessarily, yet it is likened to natural instruments, which are active under the efficiency of the agent which manages them ; and this also, in the hand of the Spirit, works mighty effects.

The *sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth*, are joined together, one subordinate to another, 2 Thess. 2. 13. The Spirit efficiently infusing holy habits ; the word objectively and actively : objectively, as outwardly proposed ; actively, as inwardly engrafted : it at least excites the new infused gracious principle, and produceth our actual conversion and believing. As the pronouncing excommunication, in primitive times, filled the person with terror ; and no question, but upon the same account the authoritative pronouncing the pardon of sin by the apostles, though only declarative, might have a mighty operation upon the soul in filling it with joy ; yet both, as managed by the Spirit, concurring with his own ordinance. So that the word is mighty in operation, as well as clear in representation ; for an activity seems to be ascribed to it by the scripture metaphors. The chief activity of it is seen in that likeness which it produces in the soul to itself. Seeds have an efficacious virtue to produce plants of the same kind with that whose seeds they are : so the word produces qualities in the heart like itself.

The law in the heart, is the law in the word transcribed in the soul ; a graft which changeth a crab-

bed stock into a sweet tree, *James* 1. 21 ; like a seal, it leaves a likeness and impression of itself ; it works a likeness to God as he is revealed in the gospel ; for we are changed into the same image ; what image ? The *same image* which we behold in *that glass*, *2 Cor.* 3. 18 ; not his essential image, but the image of his glory represented in the gospel for our imitation. The word is the glory of God in a glass, and imprints the image of the glory of God in the heart. It is a softening word, and produces a mollified heart ; an enlightening word, and causes an enlightened soul ; a divine word and engenders a divine nature : it is a spiritual word, and produces a spiritual frame ; as it is God's will, it subdues our will ; it is a sanctifying truth, and so makes a sink of sin to become the habitation of Christ. To conclude, this is certain, the promise in the word breeds principles in the heart suitable to itself ; it shows God a Father, and raises up principles of love and reverence ; it shows Christ a Mediator, and raises up principles of faith and desire. Christ in the word conceives Christ in the heart ; Christ in the word, the beginning of grace, conceives Christ in the soul, the hope of glory.

PART II.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE.

How admirable the power of the gospel—Superiority of it—In what it particularly appears—Its divine authority—Why the gospel is so much opposed—The sin of attempting to obstruct the gospel—Shall continue till the purposes of God are accomplished by it—The excellence of the new birth—Few born again by the gospel—Necessity of examination—How the word should be preached—We should glorify God for his word—Should highly value it—Should pray for the success of it—Should wait upon God in hearing it—Not to rest in hearing—Reasons why so few are renewed by the gospel.

BUT we now come to the use of the subject, *first*, for our *instruction*.

First. How admirable then is the power of the gospel! It is a quickening, not a dead word; a powerful, not a weak word; a sharp edged word, not dull; a piercing word, not cutting only skin deep, *Heb. 4. 12.* What welcome work it makes, when a door of utterance and a door of entrance are both opened together! It hath a mighty power to outwrestle the principalities of hell, and demolish the strong holds of sin in the heart. It is a word of which it may be said, as the Psalmist of the sun, *His*

circuit is to the ends of the earth, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof, Psal. 19. 6. No part of the soul is hidden from a new birth by the warm beams of it, when directed by God to the soul. What a powerful breath is that which can make a dead man stand upon his feet and walk! If you should find your faces, by looking in a glass, transformed into an angelical beauty, would you not imagine some strange and secret virtue in that glass? How powerful is this gospel word, which changes a beast into a man, a devil into an angel, a clod of earth into a star of heaven!

2. It is above the power of all *moral philosophy*. The wisdom of the heathens never equalled the gospel in such miracles: the political government of the best states never made such alterations in the hearts of men. How excellent is that gospel, which hath done that for the renewing of millions of souls, which all the wit and wisdom of the choicest philosophers could never effect upon one heart! All other lectures can do no more than allay the passions, not change them; bring them into an order fit for human society, not beget them for a divine fellowship; not draw them forth out of a principle of love to God, and fix them upon so high an end as the glory of God that is invisible. This is the glorious work of the gospel, which enables man not only to perform moral actions, but inspires him with divine principles and ends, and makes him highly delight in the ways he formerly abhorred. What are a few sprinklings of changes moral philosophy has wrought in the lives of men, to the innumerable ones the gospel hath wrought, which were such undeniable realities, that they were never openly contradicted by any of the most violent persecutors of the christian religion; and were always the most urged argument for the truth of the gospel in the ancient apologies for it? How long may we read and hear mere moral discourses, and arrive no higher than some reformation of life, with unchanged hearts;

have sin beaten from the out-works, yet retain the great fort, the heart?

Again, the power of the gospel is above the power of the law. The natural law sees not Christ; the Mosaical law dimly shows him afar off: the gospel brings him near, to be embraced by us, and us to be divinely changed by him. The natural law makes the model and frame of a man; the Mosaical adds some colours and preparations; and the gospel conveys spirit into them. The natural law begets us for the world; the Mosaical kills us for God; and the gospel raises us up to life. The natural law makes us serve God by reason; the Mosaical by fear; and the gospel by love. It is by this, and not by the law, those three graces, which are the main evidences of life, are settled in the soul: it begets faith, whereby we are taken off from the stock of Adam, and inserted in Christ; hope, whereby we flourish; and love, whereby we fructify. By faith, we have life; by hope, strength; by love, liveliness and activity: all these are the fruits of the gospel administration.

3. Its power appears in the *subjects* it hath been instrumental to change. Souls most defiled by sin, have been made miraculously clean; it hath changed the hands of rapine into instruments of charity: hearts full of filth, into vessels of purity: it hath brought down proud reason to the obedience of faith, and made active lusts to die at the foot of the cross: it hath struck off Satan's chains, and snatched away his captives into the liberty of God's service. It hath changed the most stubborn hearts. The conversion of a great company of those Jewish priests that were most violent against it, and the author of it, is ascribed to the power of the word; *And the word of God increased, and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith, Acts 6. 7.* How many were raised to life by Peter's sermon! More souls turned, than words spoken upon record. It subdues the will,

which cannot be conquered but by its own consent. Light can dart in upon the understanding whether a man will or not, and flash in his face, though he keep it in unrighteousness : conscience will awaken and rouse them, though men use all the arts they can to still it. The will cannot be forced to any submission against its own consent ; the power of the gospel is seen in the conquest of the will, and putting new inclinations into that.

4. The power of it is seen in the *suddenness* of its operation. In a moment, *in the twinkling of an eye*, like the change at the last resurrection. *We shall all be changed in a moment, at the last trump*, 1 Cor. 15. 51, 52. How have troops of unmastered lusts fled at the voice of the gospel-trumpet, like a flock of frightened birds, and left their long-possessed mansion ! How have the affections, which have sheltered so many enemies against God, been on the sudden weary of their residence, and abhorred what they loved, and loved what the moment before they abhorred ! How have welcome temptations been upon this sudden change rejected, a despised Saviour dearly embraced, a furious soul tamed, a darling self crucified, and a soul opened to every temptation strongly fortified against it ! How frequent are the examples, in the first times of christianity, of men that have been almost as bad as devils one day, one hour, and joyful martyrs the next ; and as soon as ever they have been changed by it, asserted the power of it in another new birth by flames ?

5. And this hath been done many times by one *part*, one particle of the word. One word of the gospel, a single sentence, hath erected a heavenly trophy in a soul, which all the volumes of the choicest mere reason could never erect ; one plain scripture hath turned a face to heaven, that never looked that way before, and made a man fix his eye there against his carnal interest. One plain scripture has killed a man's sins, and quickened his heart with eternal life ;

one word of Christ, remembered by Peter, made him weep bitterly ; and two or three scriptures, pressed by the same Peter upon his hearers, pricked their hearts to the quick. How has hell flashed in the face of a sinner, out of a small cloud of a threatening, and heaven shot into the soul from one little diamond spark of a promise ! a little seed of the word, like a grain of mustard-seed, changed the soul from a dwarfish to a tall stature ! This the experience of every age can testify.

6. And this power appears in the *simplicity* of it. *Savanarola observes, that when he neglected the preaching of the scripture, and applied himself to discourses of philosophy, he gained little upon the hearts of people : but when he came to illustrate and explain the scripture, the minds of people were wonderfully inflamed and excited to a serious frame. And that when he discoursed in a philosophical manner, there was a non-attention, not only of the more ignorant, but the more learned sort too. But when he preached scripture truths, he found the minds of men mightily delighted, stung with divine truth, brought to compunction, and a reformation of their lives ; which shows, saith he, the power of the word, acting more vigorously than all human reason in the world. And indeed, scripture and scripture-reason, is the wisdom of God ; all other reason is the wisdom of man. God will depress man's wisdom, and advance his own. It works as it is the *word of God, which lives and abides for ever*, 1 *Pet.* 1. 23. To wrap a fine piece of silk about a sword, or gild a diamond, is to hinder the edge of the one, and the lustre of the other.

Second Information. The gospel is then certainly of *divine authority*. Since in this God hath set a *tabernacle for his Son* of righteousness to move in ; as the heavens are the tabernacle for the material

* Triumph. Crucis. lib. 2. cap. 8. p. 100.

sun, *Psal.* 19. 4. That word that raises the dead, must needs be the word of no less than God. Our Saviour's discovery of men's thoughts argued his Deity; the word's discovery of the inward workings of the heart, and the alteration it makes there, evidences a divine stamp upon it. God would never have made a lie so successful in the world, or blessed it in making those alterations in men, so comely in the eye of moral nature, so advantageous to human society, as the principles it instills into the minds of men are. A lie would never have been blessed to be an instrument of so much virtue and truth; it would not consist with the righteousness of God's government, or his goodness and truth as governor, to bring the hearts of men into so beautiful an order by a deceitful gospel.

What word ever had such trophies? What engine ever brought down so many strong holds? If the lame walk by the strength of it, if the dead are raised by the power of it, if lepers are cleansed by the virtue of it, if impure souls are sanctified, dead souls enlivened, are we to question its divine authority? Should a word work such wonderful effects for so many ages, that had no stamp of divine authority upon it? Would all those witnesses be given by God to a mere imposture? Let the victories it has gained evidence the arm that wields it: What sword was used at the first conquest of the world through grace, but this of the Spirit? How soon was the devil, with all his numerous idols, fain to fly before it! How soon was he, with all his lusts, forced to leave his habitation in the hearts of men! Is not that of divine authority that so routs the enemies of God, puts sin to flight, expels spiritual death, breaking the bands of that worst king of terrors? That had skill to find out sin in its lurking holes, and power to dispossess that, and introduce spiritual life into the soul?

Can that be a thing less than divine, that restores man to his due place as a creature respecting his

Creator, referring all things to his glory? that implants the love, fear, hope of God in the mind? that makes man of a miserable corrupt creature to become divine? that roots out the vices of hell, and stores the soul with the virtues of heaven? Can such a gospel be termed less than a divine word of truth? If there be any word, that can so change the nature, and transform wolves into lambs, let it have the honour and due praise when it is found out; but whatsoever the atheism of the world is, that never felt the powerful efficacy of it, you surely that have felt it a mighty weapon to conquer the devils that once possessed you, and an instrument to new beget you when you lay in your blood, should entertain no whisper against the divine authority of it, but count it the power and wisdom of God, as, indeed, it is in itself, and in its effects upon souls. It is said there, to be *the power of God unto salvation, Rom. 1. 16*; upon that account the apostle was not ashamed of it, neither should we; but conclude as the same apostle saith, *If I be not an apostle, yet to you I am an apostle*; so if the gospel be not in itself the gospel of God, surely it is so to you who have been renewed.

Third Information. It shows us the reason *why* the gospel is so much opposed by Satan in the world. It begets those for heaven, whom he had begotten for hell. It pulls down his image, and sets up God's; it pulls down the crown off his head, the sceptre from his hand, snatches subjects from his empire, straitens his territories, and demolishes his forts, breaks his engines, outwits his subtilty, makes his captives his conquerors, and himself, the conqueror, a captive; it pulls men *out of the kingdom of darkness, and translates them into a kingdom of light, Col. 1. 13.* And all this, as it is a word of truth, opposed to his word of deceit, whereby he hath cheated mankind, and deceived the nations; that we may well say of him, as the apostle of death, *O death where is thy sting?* 1 Cor. 15. 55. O hell, where is thy sting? O Sa-

tan, where is thy victory? This slays Satan, and revives the soul.

Fourthly. We see then how *injurious* they are to God, who would *obstruct the progress* of the gospel in the world: that, as the Papists, would hinder the reading and preaching of the word. Whose seed are they, but the seed of that dragon, that would as well hinder the new birth, as devour a divine-begotten babe *as soon as ever it were born?* *Rev. 12. 4.* Such would hinder the greatest and most excellent work of God upon the souls of men, would have no spiritual generations for God in the world. Such envy Christ a seed, and God a family, they would despoil him of a family on earth, though they cannot of a family in heaven. In banishing the word, they would banish the grace of God out of the world, and leave no place, in a world drowned with ignorance, where this dove should set her foot. Those that would take away the seed, would not have a spiritual harvest, but reduce souls to a deplorable famine; lock them up in the grave, and keep them under the hands of a spiritual death.

Fifthly. It informs us, that the gospel shall then *endure* in the world, as long as God hath any to regenerate by it. Men may puff at it, but they cannot extinguish it; it is a word of truth; and truth is mighty, and will prevail. It was a mighty wind wherein the Spirit came upon the apostles, to show not only the quick and speedy progress of the gospel, as upon the wings of the wind, but the mighty force of it, that men can no more silence the sound of the gospel, than they can the blustering of the wind. It shall prevail in all places, where God hath a seed to bring in, a people to beget. Those given to Christ shall come from far: *From the east, and from the west, and from the land of Sinim, Isa. 49. 12,* (now, I think, called Danietta in Egypt.) The word, being the instrument, shall sound every where, where he hath sons and daughters to beget for Christ. As long

as Christ retains his royalty, *his mouth shall be a sharp sword, Isa. 49. 2.* That is the first thing concluded on between God and Christ, before they come to any further treaty; which is expressed in that chapter. As Christ shall be his salvation to the ends of the earth, so shall the word be the instrument of it to the end of the world, the *polished shaft is hid in his quiver.* As he is a light to the Gentiles, so the golden candlestick of this gospel wherein this light is set, shall endure in spite of men and devils. Since his promise of a seed to Christ stands sure, the word, whereby he begets a generation for him, is as sure as the promise, and shall not return void; *But it shall accomplish that which he pleases, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto he sent it, Isa. 55. 11.* Never fear then the removal of the gospel out of the world, though it be removed out of a particular place; since it is a word of truth, and an instrument ordained to so glorious an end.

Sixthly. It is a sign then God hath some to regenerate, *when he brings his gospel to any place.* He hath a pleasure to accomplish, and it shall not return unto him void. Prosperity is entailed upon it for the doing the work whereto he sent it. Since then it is appointed an instrument, in the hand of the Spirit, for a new begetting, it will be efficacious upon some souls where it comes; for the wise God would not send it, but to attain its main end upon some hearts. God never sends his word to any place, but it is received and relished by some as the savour of life. It looses the bands of spiritual death in some, and binds them harder upon obstinate sinners: to them that perish it is the savour of death.

In *every place* the gospel was savoury to some; *God made manifest the savour of his knowledge,* by the apostles *in every place, 2 Cor. 2. 14, 15.* Wherever this seed is sown, the harvest hath been reaped, either more or less. It is fruitful at Corinth, for there God had much people, *Acts 18. 10.* It is not

fruitless at Athens, though the harvest was less ; most mocked, but some believed, and but one man of learning and worldly wisdom, *Acts* 17. 32, 34. When God sends John in a way of righteousness, if the pharisees believe not, God will make a conquest of publicans and harlots ; *John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you believed not : but the publicans and harlots believed him, Matt.* 21. 32. The net of the gospel is not cast wholly in vain, but from the time of its coming, to the time of its removal, some souls have been caught, though not of the most delicious fish, yet of the worst sort.

Seventhly. It informs us, what an *excellent* thing is a new birth ! The end is more desirable than the means : this is the chief end of all the ordinances of God in the world ; the gospel had never been revealed but for this intent : this is the design of the Spirit's operation in any gospel administration. All the lines of the word are to draw the lineaments of grace in the heart. This must be a noble and excellent thing, for which chiefly the oracles of God sound in the world, for which so great a light is set up in the gospel : all the love of Christ breathes in the gospel : the whole testament is sealed by his blood ; the perpetual workings of the Holy Ghost, the preaching of the word, the celebration of the sacraments, are in subserviency to this end ; the one to make us live ; the other to make us grow. How inconceivably excellent is that, how valuable in the eye of God, how advantageous to the happiness of men, that is, the design wherein so many divine operations meet !

Eighthly. What a lamentable thing is it, that so *few* should be new-born by the word of truth ! How many are there among us, that understand not what a new begetting and birth is, no more than Nicodemus when he discoursed with our Saviour ! What a deplorable thing is it that the word should be preached, and so little regarded ! that not only an hour's, but many years' discourses should pass away (as the

psalmist speaks of our lives) *like a tale that is told!* *Psa.* 90. 9. How miserable is that man, that hath the objective cause of the new birth, without the effective! It is the word of truth; what will become of you, if you prefer a word of error before it? If you prefer the devil's killing suggestions before God's reviving oracles? What does the word of truth move you to, but to a new birth? Why will any man struggle against it? Every resistance of the word, is a resistance of God himself; it is God hews *by the prophets*, *Hos.* 6. 5. It is God offers to beget by the word; every reluctance then against the word, is a reluctance against God. The word will either bring in a new form of grace, or a new form of torment. If the inworking of the one be rejected, the inworking of the other cannot be avoided; it will either cut the bands of a spiritual death, or cut the sinews of the souls. That piece of timber that has not its knots cut off for the building, shall be cut in pieces for the fire. A new life waits for them that *obey the gospel*; an endless death for them that reject it: they that *obey not the gospel, know not God*, *2 Thess.* 1. 8. And what is reserved for such, but revenging flames in another world? It would be happy for such, that they had never heard of a renewing gospel. Every gospel discourse that might have been the cause of a spiritual life, and a divine cordial, if received; rejected, will be a bitter drug in that potion which shall be drunk in an eternal fever.

Ninthly. Hereby you may *examine* whether you are new begotten. It is the word of truth whereby God begets. In this word he opens the glory of his grace, and through this he conveys the power of his grace. The conquests of Christ were to be made by the word, and it was so settled at the first constitution of him as Mediator and Redeemer; *He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword*, *Isa.* 49. 2. It was by this the hearts of men were to be conquered. And

what heart is not subdued by the sword of his mouth, is not subdued by the power of his arms. Some word or other was the instrument to beget you, I speak of people grown up. The apostle's interrogation is a strong negative. There is no believing without *hearing*, *Rom. 10. 14.* Hearing goes before believing: he lays it down as a certain conclusion from his former arguing; *So that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

If you conclude yourselves new born, how came you by it? Is it by the word, or no? That is God's ordinary means. If you be not renewed by this, it is not likely you are renewed at all: no other instrument hath God ordinarily appointed to this end. Afflictions may plough men for it, but the word is the only seed that renews the face of the earth. All false notions or presumptions of the new birth must be brought to this touchstone; it is a mis-shapen and monstrous birth, that is not by a seed of the same kind: the law in the heart has no seed of the same nature with it to engender it, but the law in the word, that word which we properly call gospel; the word of truth, not the word of philosophy, which is a word of uncertainty; God's word, not Plato's word. If a thousand beasts had been consumed by common fire, not one of them had been an holocaust, a grateful sacrifice, unless consumed by the fire of the altar which came down from heaven. Moral wisdom is not that fire, hath not that eminent descent from heaven; it is not that speech from heaven whereby our Saviour is said yet to speak, *Heb. 12. 25.* A little spark kindled by the voice of Christ from heaven, from whence he yet speaks in the gospel, is more worth than all the light in the world, kindled by the sparks of moral wisdom.

Those qualifications which grow of their own accord, without the word, are like the herbs which sprout in wild places without any tillage, which are of a different kind than what are planted and watered

in a garden, and overlooked by the care of man : if your dispositions, (you boast of, were not planted by the word, how fair soever they may look, they are but a wild kind of fruit. Therefore it concerns you to look back upon yourselves, think what word it was whereby you were begotten. If no particular word can be remembered, if your regeneration were wrought insensibly in your younger years, examine what suitability there is between the word and your souls, whether your hearts are turned into the nature of it. The measures of grace are according to the measures of the word : if you cannot remember the first glorious entrance of it, you must see for the rich dwelling of it. An inhabitant may enter into our houses unseen, but he cannot dwell there without our knowledge ; the lines of the word will be seen in the heart, though the particular pencil whereby they were wrought, may not be remembered.

Tenthly. It instructs ministers *how to preach*. It is the word of truth, the gospel that must be the main matter of our preaching, and those things in the gospel that have the greatest tendency to work this great change in men, and carry it on to greater maturity. The instrument of conversion is not barely the letter of the word, but the sense and meaning of it, rationally impressed upon the understanding, and closely applied to the conscience. The opening the word is the life of it, and the true means of regeneration. If any man would turn his servant or child from a course of sin, would he discourse to them of the nature of the sun and stars, their magnitude, motions, number, and qualities ; this would be nothing to the purpose ; his way would be to show them the deformity and danger of their sin.

The word of truth is God's instrument, and it should be ours ; what is the end of the word, should be the end of our preaching. It was through the gospel, the apostle begat the Corinthians ; not that the preaching of the law is excluded, but it must be preached in order

to the gospel, as a preparation to it. Whatsoever in the word of truth prepares for the new birth, produces it, cherishes it, preserves it, centres in one and the same end. How careful and industrious should we be to present children to God, that we may say, *Here am I, and the children which thou hast given me.* The new birth will be your *joy, and crown*, and you will be ours, 1 *Thes.* 2. 19, 20. Aaron's sons are called the *generations of Moses*, as well as Aaron, *Numb.* 3. 1. Though none of his natural sons are reckoned. Aaron's by natural generation, Moses's perhaps by a spiritual regeneration and instruction.

The SECOND USE of the subject of *exhortation*.

1. Highly *glorify God* for the word of truth which is so great an instrument. How thankful should we be for an invention to secure our estates from consuming, houses from burning, bodies from dying! The gospel, the word of truth, does much more than this, it is an instrument to beget a soul for God; an instrument whereby God makes himself our father, and us his children. It is but an instrument, let not the glory be given to the instrument, but to the agent. As it is an instrument, let it have part of your affection: but nothing of the glory that belongs to God; love the truth, but glorify and bless the God of truth, that hath ordained it to be so excellent an instrument.

(1.) Bless God in your *hearts*. Bless him that ever you had the word of truth made known to you. How many millions sit in a spiritual darkness, without so much as the means of a new birth, millions never heard the sound of it, nor ever will. Much more bless him that it hath been successful to any of you. Have you any thing in your spirits that bears witness to the truth of it? When you read or hear it, do you find something of kin to it in your souls, and feel something within you rise up and call it blessed; how should you read and hear it, with eruptions of thankfulness to God for it, hearty embraces of it, and fervent ejaculations to God to work more in you by

the power of it! Why hath the world grappled with any of our souls, and not with others? arrested any of you in a course of sin, and left others to walk in their own ways, to run down silently like the streams of a river, till swallowed up in an ocean of death.

The apostle Paul heard the voice, others with him only a *sound of words*, *Acts* 9. 7, & 22. 9: some have heard a sound of words without the voice of God in it, while others have heard a divine voice in a human sound. The wind has blown upon many, God in that wind only upon few; some have received air, whilst others have received spirit and life; some have only the body of the word, while others feel the spirit and power of it in their hearts; shall not God be glorified for this? Had it not been for him and his Spirit, words had been only words and wind to all as well as to some.

(2.) Glorify God in your *lives*. As you feel the power of it in your hearts, let others see the brightness and efficacy of it in your actions. The new-born creature should principally aim at the glory of God, since the instrument whereby he is begotten, was first published for the glory of God *in the highest*, *Luke* 2. 14. What is produced by the efficacy of such an instrument, must have the same end, viz. the glory of God in the practice of holiness. A holy gospel imprinted can never leave the heart and life unholy. A gospel coined for the glory of God, when wrought in the heart, can never suffer the soul to aim chiefly at self, but at the great end for which the gospel was first discovered; the gospel of holiness and truth in the heart, will engender sincerity and holiness in the life.

2. *Prize the word of truth*, which works such great effects in the soul. Value that as long as you live, which is the cord whereby God hath drawn any of you out of the dungeon of death. Never count that foolishness by which God has inspired you with the choicest wisdom; and never count that weakness which has made any of you of dead, living; of darkness, light; and of miserable, hap-

py by grace. If a soul be worth a world, and therefore to be prized, how precious ought that to be which is an instrument to regenerate a soul for the felicity of another world! How should the law of God's mouth be better to us than *thousands of gold and silver*, *Psal.* 119. 72. How should we prize that word whereby any of us have seen the glory of God in his sanctuary, the glory of God in our souls! When corruptions are strong, it is an engine to batter them. When our hearts are hard, it is a hammer to break them; when our spirits are impostumated, it is a sword to cut them. When our hearts are cold, it is a fire to inflame them. When our souls are faint, it is a cordial to refresh them; it begins a new birth, and maintains it. It is the seed from whence we spring, *1 Pct.* 1. 23, the glass wherein we *see the glory of God*, *2 Cor.* 3. 18. By the waters of the sanctuary we have both meat for nourishment, and medicines for cure from the tree that grows by its streamis; *The fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf for medicine*, *Ezek.* 47. 12. Have a great regard to it, keep it in the midst of your hearts *for it is life*, *Prov.* 4. 21, 22.

3. *Pray*, and *endeavour* for the *preservation* and *success* of the word of truth. Were there a medicine that could preserve live, how chary should we be in preserving that? *The gospel is the tree, whose leaves cure the nations*, *Revel.* 22. 2. It was a blessing God endued the creatures with, when he bid them *increase and multiply*, *Gen.* 1. 22. It was an evidence that he intended to preserve the world. If the gospel get ground in the hearts of men, it is an evidence it shall continue in spite of the oppositions of men or devils.

4. *Wait upon God in the word*. Where there is a revelation on God's part, there must be a hearing on ours. *Sit down* therefore *at the feet of God*, and *receive of his words*, *Deut.* 33. 3. *Despise* it not; he that contemns it, never intends to be new begotten, since he slights the means of God's appointment; he that intends an end, will use all means proportionably to

his desires for that end. He that contemns it never was renewed ; habitual grace being wrought by it, cannot but in its own nature have a great affection to it. He that loves Christ cannot but love all the methods of his operations.

Despise not the word *because it is but an instrument*. Say not, because God is the chief agent, therefore you need not come to the word. Our Saviour knew that *man did not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, Mat. 4. 4.* Did he therefore neglect means for preserving his life ? Because God gives the increase, should not the husbandman plough and sow ? If God does not work upon you by the means, you can have no rational hopes he will do it any other way : what though ministers can only speak to the ear ? John Baptist could do no more, whose ministry was notwithstanding glorious, in being the forerunner of Christ. To neglect it therefore is to double bar your hearts against the entrance of grace, and slight the truth which Christ brought down from the bosom of God.

(1.) Never did God appoint *any other way* but this ; miracles were never appointed but as attendants upon this : miracles come after teachings in the great gifts to the church : first the *manifestation of the Spirit, the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge*, 1 Cor. 12. 7, 8, 9, 10, then gifts of healing, and miracles. Miracles are ceased, as being not absolutely necessary ; but the ministry of the word will last to the end of the world. By the prophets God brings souls out of a state of bondage, and by the prophets he preserves them in a state of grace ; *By a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved, Hos. 12. 13.* Miracles and the resurrection of one from the dead, was never appointed under the legal administration, but Moses and the prophets, *Luke 16. 13.* These were the ordinary means, and if these did not work, miracles were inefficacious.

(2.) God never made *any promise* but in this way. God promised to circumcise their hearts to love him with all their soul, but in the way of *hearing his voice, and observing his statutes*, Deut. 30. 6, 10, 11. He meets souls only that *remember him in his way*, Isa. 64. 5. And to the preaching of the gospel only our Saviour promised his *presence to the end of the world*, Matt. 28. 20; the promise is perpetually and immovably throughout all ages of the world fixed to this command. The promising his presence to the preaching of the gospel, implies that his presence shall be enjoyed only by attendance on the gospel. The gracious workings of the Spirit are by this: they are the words of Christ brought to remembrance by him, whereby he so mightily operates.

(3.) No other way did God apparently *work by formerly*. In the time when God did especially manifest himself to his people by visions, dreams, and apparitions of angels, and in those ways made revelations to them, he converted not any either from a state of nature, or from a particular fall, but by the word. *Manasseli's conversion was by the word of the seers*, 2 Chron. 33. 18. Nor was David reclaimed after his fall by an immediate vision, but by the ministry of Nathan. Peter by a look, which revived the word spoken unto him. The angel that attended the Eunuch, made no impressions upon him, but was ordered to direct Philip thither to explain to him the mystery of the gospel; and the Spirit particularly orders him to go near the chariot, but makes no impressions upon him but by the ministry of the word. An angel is sent to direct Philip, but Philip is sent to discover Christ. An angel is sent to Cornelius, not to preach the gospel, but to direct him where to send for a teacher; the Spirit prepares Peter to go, and likewise prepares Cornelius for his reception. God prepares the jailor by an earthquake, but renews him not but by the ministry of Paul. In the times of the gospel there was first to be a teaching of God's ways, be-

fore a walking in his paths, *Isa.* 3. 3. The arm that made heaven and earth, makes the new heart and new spirit, but by a word as well as them. The net of the gospel is only appointed to catch the fish ; though the fish that had the tribute-money in its mouth, was immediately for the service of Christ, yet he would not use his power to bring it to the shore, without Peter's casting out the net. Christ first brings souls to the net, and by the net to himself.

(4.) God hath *always blest* this, more or less. Moses's rod in Moses's hand hath wrought miracles ; Christ's rod in the Spirit's hand hath wrought greater : the new creations have been always by it, and the after-breathings of the Spirit through it. By this he makes men righteous, holy, sincere, in a way of eminence, as the morning light which *increaseth to a perfect day*, and no longer as a *morning cloud* which quickly vanishes, *Hos.* 6. 5 ; which some understand of a gospel promise mixed with that discourse. How has the light of the beauty and excellency of God, flashing upon the understanding from the glass of the gospel, filled the will and affections of many with desire and love to that glory it represents, and that state it offers ! The very leaves of it, the profession, hath healed nations, and brought human societies into order, and the fruit of it hath been the cure of many a soul. Wait therefore for the falling of this fruit. Grace is a beam from the sun of righteousness, but darted through the medium of gospel air ; a pearl engendered by the blood of Christ, but only in the gospel sea.

The word hath not been without its blessing to others ; it hath raised men from death to life. Is the virtue of the seed expired ? or the strength of the Lord grown feeble ? If ever therefore you would have the image of God in inward impressions of grace, and outward expressions of holiness, you must look for your transformation in and by the gospel. All the other knowledge in the world cannot give a man

a right notion of the new birth, much less produce it. Look not after enthusiasm, nor expect it in new ways; *to the law and to the testimony*, ways of God's appointing. The Jews could not expect an angel to bring them soundness of limbs, but by the pool; nor we the Spirit to infuse grace into us, but by the word. It is from the mercy-seat only God speaks to Israel. Wisdom's gates are the places where to expect her alms, *Prov.* 8. 34. Wait therefore upon the word, wherein the Spirit of God travails with souls.

Do any enquire, how shall we wait upon the word, so as that we may be new begotten by it?

I answer,

1. Wait upon the word *frequently*. Be often in reading, and hearing, and meditating on it. Men set upon these works, as if they were afraid they should be new-born too soon, or prejudiced in their concerns and contentments in the world; as if they feared the mighty wind of the Spirit should blow away their beloved dross too fast; as if it were a matter of indifference to be like their Maker. If you had gold not thoroughly refined, would you not cast it again and again into the fire? If filth not wholly purged, would you not use the fountain again and again; Those that are in the sun are coloured and heated by it, and have things more visible: those that are much in the word, see more of the wonders, feel more of the warmth, receive deeper impressions, are endued with the grace and holiness of truth, have a purer flame in their affections for heaven.

How do you know but an opportunity missed, might have been the best? How do you know but the Spirit might have joined himself to the word, as Philip to the Eunuch's chariot while he was reading; While Peter yet spake those words, (it is said) *the Holy Ghost fell upon them which heard the word, Acts* 10. 44. What words? Even the marrow of the gospel, *that through his name, whosoever believes in him shall receive remission of sins, ver.* 43. God may have a

portion ready for us, and we go without it, because we are not ready to receive it. We must not expect a raven to bring us food upon a bed of sluggishness. Do it the rather, because you may live to see such times, wherein Bibles may be as much shut, as they are now open, wherein, as in former times, you may be willing to give a large parcel of your goods for one chapter of it. We read of some that have given a load of hay for one chapter of St. James. Be frequent in waiting upon the word.

2. Let your hearts be fixed upon that which is the *great end* of the word. Regeneration is the end of the gospel; come then with minds fixed upon this end, and desires for it. Regard it not as a mere sound of words but as an instrument of the noblest operations in the soul. If this be the great work of the gospel, we ought to read and hear it with desires to be enlivened where we are dead, quickened where we are dull; be made new creatures, where we are yet but old; taller creatures, where we are yet but of a low stature; not only to have our understandings instructed, but our hearts changed. *To enquire after God, to behold the beauty of the Lord, Psa. 27. 4*, that we may be transformed into it: to look for God who *is in the word of a truth*; for the kingdom of God comes nigh to you in the gospel; that was the word that Christ, when he sent his disciples out first to preach, bid them speak unto men, *Luke 12. 9*.

Men usually get no more than they come to seek. He that goes to market, intending only to lay out his money upon some trifle, returns for the most part with no better commodity. Zaccheus got upon the tree to meet with Christ, and so noble an end wanted not an excellent success; that day came *salvation into his house, Luke 19. 9*. When the Jews did not mind the end of sacrifices, and regarded not the things God principally looked for in them, God slighted them, and they went without any divine operations upon their souls by them, *Isa. 1. 11, 13, 14*. When our ends

suit the gospel, then are we like to feel gospel influences. We come with wrong ends, and therefore return with unchanged hearts ; we come for a sound, and go away with no more. Our end therefore in coming should be to gain this new birth, or increase the growth of the new creature ; our ends are not else conformable to the ends of God in it ; therefore, as the earth drinks in the rain, and the roots in the earth attract it unto themselves that they may bring forth fruit ; so should we open our hearts to receive the showers of the word, with an aim at a new birth, or a further growth. As this is, *finis operis*, so it should be *finis operantis*.

3. Mind the word in the *simplicity* of it, and that in it which tends to that end. Some men are more taken with colours than truth ; more enamoured with words than matter ; fill themselves only with air, and neglect the substance. Such are like those that are pleased with the colours of the rainbow, more than with the light reflected, or the covenant of God represented by it. No man is renewed by phrases and fancies, those are only as the oil to make the nails of the sanctuary drive in the easier. *Acceptable words* joined with words of truth, are as the fastening of the nails, both *given by one shepherd*, *Eccles. 12. 11.* Words there must be to make things intelligible ; illustrations to make things delightfully intelligible, but the seminal virtue lies not in the husk and skin, but in the kernel, the rest dies, but the substance of the seed lives, and brings forth fruit ; separate therefore between the husk and the seed. The word does not work as it is elegant, but as it is divine, as it is a word of truth. Illustrations are but the ornaments of the temple, the glory of it is in the ark and mercy-seat. It is not the engraving upon the sword cuts, but the edge ; nor the key, as it is gilt, opens, but as fitted to the wards. *Your faith must not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, 1 Cor. 2. 5.* It is the juice of the meat, and not the garnish-

ings of the dish, that nourishes. Was it the word as a pleasant song, or as a divine seed, that changed the souls of old, made martyrs smile in the midst of flames? It was the knowledge of the excellency of the promise, and not worldly eloquence, made them with so much courage slight gibbets, stakes, executioners; they had learned the truth as it is in Jesus.

4. Mind the word *as the word of truth*. Take it not upon the account of persons, value it for its own sake, as it is a word of truth. It is neither Paul nor Apollos, but God that gives the increase. Value it not by men; it is no matter what the pipe is, whether gold or lead, so the water be the water of life; the word has an edge, because it is the word of God, not because it is whetted upon this or that grindstone. Some will scarce receive a truth, but from one they fancy; as if a man should be so foolish as to refuse a medicine which will preserve his life, because it is not presented to him in a glass which he hath a particular esteem of. To receive or refuse any truth upon the account of the person, is a sign of carnality, and the way to remain carnal; upon this account the apostle pronounces the Corinthians again and again carnal, *1 Cor. 3. 4.*

Despise not the meanest instrument. Our Saviour in his agony was comforted by an angel, much more inferior to him who was the Lord of angels, than any minister can be to a hearer. Mr. Peacock being fellow of a college, in great despair, when some minister had been discoursing with him, and prevailing nothing, offering to pray with him, *No*, saith he, *dishonour not God so much, as to pray for such a reprobate*. A young scholar of his standing by, answered, "Surely a reprobate could not be so tender of God's honour:" which words prevailed more to the bringing him to believe, than all that the other had spoken. When men turn their backs upon the word, because the mouth does not please them, they turn their backs upon God, *John 13. 20*, and perhaps

upon their own mercy. When any have respect to the man more than the word, God will leave them to the operation of the man, and withdraw his own.

5. Attend upon the word with *an eye to God*. Look not for the new birth only from the word. It was the folly of the Jews, to think to find life in the scriptures without Christ; life in the letter, without the original of life, *John* 5. 39, 40; *Except the Lord build the house*, that is, the temple, *they labour in vain that build it*, *Psa.* 127. 1. Without God all our endeavours to build a spiritual temple, are like the striving to wash a blackamoor white. No believing the word, though preached a thousand times, without *God's revealing his arm*, *Isa.* 53. 1. It is not the file that makes the watch, but the artist by it. No instrument can act without the virtue of some superior agent: it is the altar that sanctifies the gold, and Christ that sanctifies his ordinances.

Paul may plant by his doctrine and miracles; Apollos may water by his affectionate eloquence; but God alone can give the increase by his almighty breath. Man sows the seed, but God only can make it fructify. The richest showers cannot make the ground fruitful, but as instruments under God's blessing. It is not said the prophets did hew them, but God by his prophets, *Hos.* 6. 5. Then have your eyes fixed upon God. It is the word of his lips, not of man's, whereby any are snatched out of the paths of the destroyer, as well as kept from them. Man's teachings direct us to Christ; God's teachings bring us to Christ; man brings the gospel, at most, to the heart, the Spirit only brings the gospel into the heart; man puts the key in the lock, God only turns it, and opens the heart by it; man brings the word of truth, and God the truth of the word into the soul; man brings the objective word of grace, God alone the attractive grace of the word.

If where there is already the new birth, the soul must be fixed on God for further openings, much

more where it is not yet wrought. David had an excellent knowledge, yet cries out for the opening of his eyes to see the wonders in God's law. It is God only can knock off the fetters of a spiritual death, and open the iron gates, that the King of glory may enter with spiritual life. If any therefore will regard the word more than as an instrument, as a partner with God in his operation, he may justly leave you to the weakness of that, and deny the influx of his own strength.

Therefore let the word be attended with prayer.

First, *Before* you wait upon God in any ordinance: plead with him as Moses did in another case, *To what purpose should I go, unless thy presence go with me?* What can the letter do without the Spirit, or words without that powerful wind to blow them into my heart? None can have life by the bread of the word, without the blessing of God; as man brings the graft, desire God to insert it. As God hath promised gifts to his church, so he promised his own teachings; *All shall know me from the least to the greatest, Heb. 8. 11:* urge God with his own promise, desire him to open his mouth, and to open your hearts; his mouth to breathe, and your hearts to receive. When men overlook God, he makes a separation between the word and his own quickening presence. The end does not necessarily arise from the means; and therefore in the use of them there must be a fiduciary recourse to the grace of God. In the time too of waiting upon God, let there be ejaculations, let your hearts be continually lift up to God, let your expectations be from him; we should be like Jacob's ladder, though the feet stand in Bethel, the house of God, our heads should reach to heaven in all our attendances.

(2.) And pray *after* you have been at the word. God is the great seer, Christ the great prophet; we should go to him for the repetition of things upon our hearts; we may have that wind afterwards by prayer, which we felt not so stiff at hearing. The operations

of truth, as well as the knowledge of it, are best fetched out upon our knees by earnest prayer. How do you know but while you are praying, the fire may descend from heaven, and transform you into a divine likeness? Thus you will make God the *Alpha* and *Omega* of his own ordinances, in your acknowledgments of him, as well as he is so in himself.

(3.) *Rest not* in bare hearing. Look for God in the ordinances as he is the living God, who lives in himself, and gives life to men, and means; *My soul longs for the living God, Psal. 84. 2*; there is a strength and glory of God to be longed for in the sanctuary: no means are to be rested in or used, but as they lead to such an end for which they are fitted. To rest in the word heard or read, is to make that our end, which God hath appointed only as the means. The word is sweet, but as it is the pipe through which God and his image, God and his grace, which is sweeter and higher than all ordinances, stream to the soul. Rejoice in the word, but only as the wise men did in the star, as it led them to Christ. The word of Christ is precious; but nothing more precious than himself, and his formation in the soul. Rest not in the word, but look through it to Christ.

6. Attend upon the word *submissively*. It is not the hearer, but the humble hearer, shall find the power of the word working in him. As it is not the speaking a prayer, but the wrestling and struggling of the heart with God in prayer, receives a gracious answer. The humble are the fittest subjects for grace, those that lie upon the ground with their mouth close to the pipe. *He gives grace to the humble*. Resign yourselves up to the word, struggle not against the battery it makes, nor the wind that blows: receive every stroke till you see the frame of the new creature. Let a silence be imposed upon the flesh, and self bowed down to the dust, while Christ the great prophet speaks.

Be not peevish, nor expostulate with God's sove-

reignty, as they did; *Wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Isa. 58. 3.* Acknowledge God a free agent, submit to his sovereign pleasure. A truly humble bow to God will prevail more than all the saucy expostulations of proud flesh. In hearing the word, pick not here a part and there a part, as suits your humour, but consider what really is God's will, and submit to it; Cornelius was of this resigning temper when the Spirit descended upon him; *We are here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God, Acts 10. 33.* An humble soul, says Kempis, by the grace of God, understands more the reasons of eternal truth, in a trice, than a man that hath studied many years in the schools, because he hath the operations of them in his heart.

7. Receive the word with *faith*. I mean, not the faith which is a part of the new creature, but an assent. There is a rational belief, that it is the word of truth, which is in many men that have no justifying faith. Actuate this. The believing the word to be so, to be the word of God, is the first step to the receiving advantage by it. No man will ever comply with that which he believes not to be true, or believes not himself to be concerned in. It is said by the apostle, *The word profited not, because it was not mixed with faith, Heb. 4. 1, 2.* There was truth in the word, but no firm assent to it in their hearts. There can never be a full compliance with Christ, in order to a new birth, if there be not first an assent to the word. Where there is a defect in the first concoction, there will also be a defect in the second and third.

If you do not believe with Naaman, that the waters of Jordan are appointed by God for this end, and not those of Abana and Pharpar, you will never be rid of the spiritual death, no more than he would have been of his leprosy. You never see God in his sanctuary, nor feel God in his power for want

of this. Surely as this made our Saviour suspend the power of his miracles, by the same reason it makes him suspend the power of his word; *He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief, Matt. 13. 58.* If men believed there were a place where they might enjoy all earthly delights in a higher measure, at an easier rate, how ambitious would they be of putting themselves into a state to enjoy them? If men did believe the report of the gospel, would they not be full of great undertakings for the enjoyment of the proffers of it? But the gospel, more is the pity, has not naturally that credit with men that a fiction has.

8. Observe much the *motions* upon your hearts *while you are attending* upon God. If the sails be not skilfully ordered to catch and hold, and make the best improvement of the wind that blows, much of the wind will pass beside it, and the ship lag many leagues behind, or lie wind-bound a long time before it receive a like gale. God hath particular seasons; *To day if you will hear his voice, Heb. 4. 7.* Sometimes the Spirit is more urging than at another time, and sends his motions thicker upon the heart; let those times be observed; and when there are motions on the Spirit's part, let there be compliance on yours. Catch a promise when the Spirit opens: bind yourselves to an observance of the precept when the Spirit shows it: let God's drawing be answered with the soul's running: observe what precious oil is dropped through the golden pipes upon the heart, and spill it not; take notice of what sparks light upon you, and lose not the warmth they may convey to your hearts; what beam of light breaks in, let it not be puffed out by a temptation or diversion: observe what is afforded to make your hearts burn, and your corruptions and sinful inclinations cool.

Regard not so much your affections, as what touches are upon your wills: affections may arise from a natural constitution of the body, some tempers being

more easily excited to exert affections than others ; yet they are not always, nor altogether, to be disregarded ; nor are they always to be looked upon as cyphers ; but, especially, see what influence the word hath upon the understanding and will chiefly, as well as upon the affections. Judge of yourselves by the inward power and might, by the breakings in of the light, and the sprightly strain of your wills. The might of the Spirit works in the *inner man*, *Eph. 3. 16* ; not in a part of the inner man but in every faculty. See what compunction there is in your souls, what strong desires in the will. Bare affections are but like a sponge, which will by a light compression let out that water which it so easily sucked up : men may receive the *word with gladness without having any root* of spiritual grace, *Mark 4. 16, 17*.

When men regard only particular affections, they usually sit down in those sparks of their own kindling, and look not after a thorough change. Or if you find such affections, see whether those affections are raised rather by the truth than the dress ; whether they be kindled by the consideration of those attributes of God, his mercy, goodness, wisdom, holiness, which have a great hand in the new birth ; whether by the deep consideration of our Saviour's death and resurrection, the great designs of the gospel ; whether the motion be orderly ; first, understanding, then will, and afterwards affections : this is a genuine flame, kindled by a fire which comes down from heaven, working upon all the parts of the soul : a bare work upon the affections is rather a strange and carnal fire. Observe, therefore, what tender blades bud and shoot forth in the higher faculties of your souls.

9. *Press the word much upon your hearts, after hearing.* How great is the neglect of this application of the word of truth ? Men will spend hours in hearing, and not one minute in serious reflections ; as if the word in their ears, or a receipt in their pockets, could cure the disease in their heart ; this is the worm

at the root of all our spiritual advantages. What is only dashed upon the fancy, or lightly coloured, may soon be washed off. The soil must be made tenacious of the seed by the harrow of meditation, which *hides it in the heart*, and covers it with earth; for want of being laid deep, and banded by serious meditation, the *seed takes no root*, *Mark* 4. 5, 6, 16, because there is not much earth about it. How can food nourish your body, unless it be concocted by natural heat? or spiritual food enliven you, unless concocted by meditation? The shepherds after they had heard the news of Christ's incarnation from the mouth of the angel, reflected upon their duty, *Luke* 2. 14, 15. Words may be kept some time upon the mind, and rolled over and over again, before they can work any sensible change, because the heart naturally hath an averseness to God and his word: as the strongest medicine must be in the body some time, and be wrought upon by the stomach, before it can work upon the humours.

How do you know, but while you are *musings*, a divine *fire*, may sparkle in your souls, and Christ rise in your hearts? Grapes must be pressed to get out the wine that will cheer the heart. Put the question to your soul, in every part you can remember, as our Saviour did to Martha. *I am the resurrection and the life. Believest thou this? John* 11. 25, 26. There is such a thing as the new birth: believest thou this? It is necessary to be had: believest thou this? God only can work it: believest thou this? and so for every divine truth. Leave not thy soul to its vagaries; hold it on to the work, press it to give a positive answer whether it believe this or that truth. Put not yourselves off with a slight answer to the question, but examine the reasons of your belief of it.

Look upon yourselves as really concerned in the word you hear; otherwise it will no more affect you, than if you should tell an ambitious man, gaping after preferment in England, of a wealthy place fallen

in Spain, which will not engage his thoughts, as being out of his sphere, and at too great a distance. To have a listlessness to such duties, or any spiritual duty, after hearing the word, which is the food of the soul, shows a great corruption within; as the heaviness in the body, and corrupt vapours in the mouth, show the badness of concoction.

10. Labour to have the *savour* of truth upon your spirits, as well as the notions of it in your heads. The kingdom of God consists *not in word, but in power*; the new birth consists not in a bare notion, but in spiritual savour. The highest notional knowledge comes far short of experimental; the knowledge a blind man hath of light and colours, by hearing a lecture upon it, is but ignorance to the knowledge he would have if his eyes were opened. Endeavour to have the *savour of Christ's ointments*, *Cant.* 1. 3, and inward sense exercised, *Heb.* 5. 14. The apostle distinguishes *knowledge* and *judgment*, *Phil.* 1. 9. Knowledge is a notion in the head; judgment, or *αἴσθησις*, is the sense or savour of it in the heart. What a miserable thing it is to spend our lives without a taste? Knowledge is but as a cloud that intercepts the beams of the sun, and doth not advantage the earth, unless melted into drops, and falling down into the bosom of it: let the knowledge of the word of the truth drop down in a kindly shower upon your hearts, let it be a knowledge of the word heated with love.

I might have added more; bring *plain* hearts to the word, put off all disguises. Moses took off his veil when he went into the presence of God. Bring not flesh and blood as your counsellors, these are no friends to a new birth. And come with love; love makes the strongest impressions upon the soul.

It might here be also worth the enquiry, *why* so few are renewed by the word of truth in this age? Why the gospel has no more powerful effect among us, as in former ages? It is a wonder to see a man regenerated by the word, as it was a *wonder for the woman*

to bring forth a man-child, Rev. 12. When our Saviour was brought into the temple, not a man but Simeon knew him; no question but many pharisees, doctors, and gentlemen, were walking there, but none but Simeon knew him, to whom he was revealed, *Luke 2. 22, 25*, the rest looked upon him as an ordinary child. Formerly men flocked to Christ as the doves to the windows; the sword of the Spirit was never unsheathed, but it cut some hearts; the word seems now to have lost its edge and efficacy, which ought to be considered and laid to heart.

Many causes may be rendered, but I will only hint at a few.

(1.) Taking religion *upon trust*. Old customs are hardly to be parted with; *Every man will walk in the name of his God, Micah 4. 5.* To root out false conceptions in religion, which either education, fancy, or humour have rooted, is very difficult.

(2.) A conceit of the *meanness* of the word: whereby there is a secret contempt of it, and so a formal and customary use of it.

(3.) A conceit of men, that they are new born *already*. Many think their condition good, because of their civil honesty. Though that be a very comely and commendable thing, yet security in it kills its thousands. Many, because they are free from the common pollutions of the world, and possessed with many amiable virtues, never consider how much their hearts are stored with an enmity against God; such count their righteousness their gain, and think it a sufficient bribe for God's mercy.

(4.) A conceit that to be new born is but to change an *opinion*. A change of opinion may look like faith, as presumption does, but it is not faith. Satan holds some men in the chain of sublimated speculations, which hinder the working of the most spiritual and influential truths.

(5.) Pride of *reason*, frequency of *disputes*. It is a rational age; an age overgrown with reason; and

the scripture tells us, *not many wise*, &c. The truths of God are very much turned into scepticism.

(6.) The common *atheism* that so much prevails among us. How should men regard a discourse of the new birth, a being born of God, when they scarce believe there is a God at all, but their own lusts, to be like unto? How should they be wrought upon by the word of God, that scarce believe there is any God to reveal a word, and that there is no word of God?

(7.) Hardness of heart, occasioned (through the just judgment of God) by the frequency and unprofitable hearing of the word. The word is most operative when it comes first into a nation or town : when the heart is not broken by hearing the word of truth, it becomes more hardened and compact in sin. Many other reasons might be rendered, but I have held you too long upon this subject.

THE
AUTHOR
OF
RECONCILIATION.

2 Cor. 5. 18, 19.

ALL THINGS ARE OF GOD, WHO HATH RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF BY JESUS CHRIST, AND HATH GIVEN TO US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION; TO WIT, THAT GOD WAS IN CHRIST RECONCILING THE WORLD UNTO HIMSELF.

PART I.

GOD THE AUTHOR OF RECONCILIATION.

Reconciliation with God explained—It is the foundation of regeneration—God the author of it—Implies former friendship—Enmity—How God may be said to love or hate believers before their actual regeneration—No man actually reconciled till he obeys the gospel—The way of reconciliation honours God—The necessity of reconciliation.

THESE words are few in number, but great in mystery; it is the heads of the gospel in a nut-shell; the most sparkling diamond in the whole golden ring of scripture. It comprehends the counsels of eternity and the transactions of time. A wonder in heaven,

God bringing forth a man-child to be a propitiation for sin, which was the Jews' stumbling-block and the Gentiles' scoff, 1 *Cor.* 1. 23, 24. But wherein the wisdom and grace of God's counsel in heaven, and the power of his actions on earth, clearly shine forth in the face of Jesus Christ. The Jacob's ladder, the upper part fixed in heaven, and the lower foot standing upon the earth, angels descended on that, God descends to man by this in acts of wisdom and grace, and man ascends to God in acts of faith and love.

If there be any mystery in christianity more admirable than another, it is this of reconciliation. If any mystery in this mystery, it is the various and incomprehensible engagement of the Father in it in and through Christ. If any thing in scripture sets forth this mystery in a few words like a picture in a little medal, it is this which I have read, wherein the apostle gives us a short, but full and clear account of the doctrine of reconciliation, which is the substantial part of the gospel.

There is a double reconciliation here and in the following verse expressed. First, *fundamental*; at the death of Christ, whereby it was obtained. This is the ground of God's laying aside his anger; this is *reconciliatio legalis* or *de jure*. Secondly, *actual* or particular, when it is complied with by faith; this regards the application of it, when God doth actually lay aside his enmity, and imputes sin no more to the person. This consists of two parts.

1. The proclamation of it. *We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God*, ver. 20. Declaring God's willingness to take men into favour; this is the declaration of *reconciliatio de jure*, or the right of reconciliation. The gospel contains the articles of peace, and the counsels and methods of God about it. It is the copy of God's heart from eternity.

2. Particular acceptance, which is on our part an acceptance of the terms of reconciliation, on God's part an acceptance of us into his favour, and a non-

imputation of our sins to us, which the apostle calls *the receiving the atonement*, Rom. 5. 11; this is the accepting the atonement, the ground of reconciliation on man's part, and the application on God's part.

The first, viz. the proclamation of it to us is God's promise to us, the other is the performance; the one is God's gracious favour to us, the other is God's gracious act in us. Christ is the cause of both these reconciliations; of the fundamental reconciliation by his death, of our actual reconciliation by his life; the one by himself in person, the other by his deputy the Spirit.

God. * God is taken here by some *εσιωδῶς* for the whole Trinity, Christ *οικονομικῶς* as Mediator. † Others, and more likely, understand by *God*, the *Father*; to whom reconciliation is ascribed *per modum appropriationis*, as he is the fountain of the divinity; as the fathers used to call him ‡. As the Father is the principal person wronged, and declaring his anger against us, the reconciliation is principally made to him: in which sense we are said to have *access to the Father*, Eph. 2. 18, through Christ and by the Spirit; the Son brings us to the Father, and the Spirit directs us to the Son. Christ takes away God's enmity to us, and the Spirit takes away our enmity to God. As the first creation is appropriated to the Father, so is the second also. The apostle having described the new state of things, ver. 17, tells us that *all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ*, ver. 18, that this new state is of God, who is no less the Creator of the second state than of the first. Adam, the common head of God's appointment, by his falling, overthrew himself and his posterity; God therefore appoints another head to reduce men again to himself. What is here called reconciling, is called *gathering together in one*, Eph. 1. 10.

* Forbs Instr. Hist. lib. 1. cap. 19. † Ibid. cap. 20.

‡ Πικλή τῇ ἡσ Nazian. Θεοτης Πηγαια ὁ πατήρ *ratione originis & principii*.

ἀνοκοφαλαίασαζζ, God would gather them together to himself under one head, as they had been separated from him under one head.

God was in Christ. Some make this expression to signify no more than by Christ, ver. 18. Or, *for Christ's sake ; As God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you, Eph. 4. 34.*

But the expression notes something more than *for Christ's sake* ; in actual pardon, Christ is the moving cause by his intercession, as well as the meritorious cause by his propitiation ; *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is a propitiation, &c. 1 John 2. 2.* But the first purpose of reconciliation, and the appointing Christ as the medium for it, had no moving cause but the infinite compassion of God to his fallen creature. Christ was not the moving cause of this, though he be the meritorious cause of all the effects of it, and laid the foundation of an actual reconciliation by being the centre of the agreement between the justice and mercy of God. God's anger was appeased by the death of Christ ; but God was the first author of this propitiation, appointing this method of restoring the creature, and this person, or Jesus, to do it.

God was in Christ. It may be meant of the Trinity, the Father was in Christ, constituting and directing, the Son was in Christ by personal union, the Spirit was in Christ, gifting him for this work of reconciliation ; but I would rather understand it of the Father.

Being in Christ is not meant,

1. Of that essential inness or oneness, whereby the Father and the Son are *one in essence*. Or as a father of the flesh, and his son, are said to be of the same nature, disposition, and likeness, whereby we say the father lives in the son, in the lineaments and temper of the son, whereby he resembles the father. It is true the Father and the Son have the same nature, the same perfections and divine excellencies ; so the Father is in the Son without any respect to reconciliation. He

is so in the Son in creation also, he is so also one with the Spirit ; but this notes some singular manner of inness in Christ which is not in the third person or in any else.

2. Nor in regard of that *affection* the Father bears to Christ. He is indeed in a peculiar manner in Christ in regard of love, more than in all believers besides. He loved him as the head, believers as the members. This is common to believers with Christ, though not in the same degree.

3. But it notes some peculiar manner of operation in Christ as Mediator. Redemption was not the work only of the Son ; the Son wrought it, the Father directed it ; the Son paid the price, the Father appointed him to do so ; received it of him, accepted it from him, and accounted it to others through him, which is that we are bound to believe, as Christ tells the Jews, *That you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him*, John 10. 38. *I am in my Father*, John 14. 20. The Father is in Christ by way of direction, support, and influence ; and Christ in the Father by way of observance, obedience, and dependence. As the world was in Christ, as in their surety and head, satisfying God ; so God is in Christ, as in his ambassador, making peace with the world. All things that Christ acted and managed in this work, are to be referred to God as the prime author.

The world. * The world properly signifies the frame of heaven and earth, and all creatures therein joined together by an exact harmony, order, and dependence upon one another ; but in the scripture is chiefly understood of mankind, the top of the lower world and end of its creation. It is frequent in all writers to put the place for the inhabitants. And it is taken for the most part for the corrupted world, the world fallen under sin and wrath, and opposing God ; *The world knew him not*, John 1. 10. And when God takes some out of the world, he calls them not by the name of

* Daille Sermon, sur. 3. Jean. 16.

the world, but his church. And those that he brings out of this sinful condition, he is said to bring out of *the world*, and to choose out of *the world*, *John* 15. 19 ; & 17. 6. The world is fundamentally reconciled, there being a foundation laid for the world to be at peace with God, if they accept of the terms upon which this amity is to be obtained. Or all ages of the world, those before the coming of Christ in the flesh, as well as those after, *1 John* 2. 2.

Reconciling. The greatest controversy lies in this word ; whether by it be meant God's reconciliation to us, or our laying down our enmity against God. Socinus and his followers say, God was not angry with man, he was reconciled before. But that this place is meant of affection toward God, because it is said, *we are reconciled to God*, and not God to us. But learned men have cleared this. The * phrase in heathen authors of men's being reconciled to their gods, is always understood for appeasing the anger of their gods, and escaping those dreadful judgments either actually inflicted or certainly threatened from heaven. By reconciliation of us to God in this place, cannot be meant our conversion or any act of ours.

1. Because the reconciliation here spoken of was the *matter* of the apostle's discourses and sermons, and the great *argument* they used to convert the world to God. If then that sense were true, it would be an impertinent argument, unworthy of those that Christ called out to be the first messengers and heralds of this redemption, the sense of their discourse would run thus ; God hath already converted you, therefore be converted to him ; as it is nonsense to exhort a man to do that very act which he hath already done.

2. This reconciliation formally consists in the *non-imputation* of sin to men ; now this is God's act, not the creature's ; not imputing sin and forgiving sin are the same thing, *Rom.* 4. 7, 8. Therefore the reconciliation itself is an act of God. If God were to be

* Grotius de satisf. cap. 7. pag. 143, 146. Owen against Biddle, cap. 629.

brought into our favour as a person offending, we should be said rather not to impute God's supposed offences to him, and not to charge him with that which was the ground of our hatred of him.

The apostle tells us that God does not impute the trespasses of the world to them emphatically, as * Grotius observes, but to another whom he had made sin for them; *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin*, ver. 21. And the apostles were sent about the world to testify this benefit, that men might give credit to God and turn to him.

And upon the declaration of this doctrine, that God had in Christ laid aside his anger for their sins, and having punished another for them, would not punish them if they embraced by faith what was proposed to them. They besought men that they would lay aside their enmity against God, as he declared himself willing to lay aside his enmity against them, and had testified this by sending his own Son to bear their punishment.

There is a like place with this, *If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life*, Rom. 5. 6, 10. If Christ died for sinners, to make an atonement for them, it was then to procure God's well-pleasedness with them, because they had offended him. But if he died to bring God in favour with us, then his death was an atonement for God, and to expiate God's offences, who never was, nor can be guilty of any towards his creatures. † But it is evident the reconciliation there mentioned as well as in the text, was antecedent to conversion, and therefore is not the same with the conversion of the creature,

1. Because otherwise the apostle's argument would have little validity in it, for it proceeds *a majori*, much

* Grotius de satisfac. cap. 7. pag. 146.

† Grotius de satisfac. cap. 7. pag. 143, &c.

more being reconciled by his death, we shall be saved. If God were so infinitely kind to us as to turn away his anger from us by the death of his Son when we were yet enemies, how much more tender will he be of us since he hath taken us into favour, and we are actually converted to him?

2. The *effect* of this reconciliation is a saving from wrath by the blood of Christ; *Much more being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him*, ver. 9. Therefore this reconciliation must be by appeasing that wrath under which we should otherwise have fallen. And the effect of it is to have peace with God; *We have peace with God*, ver. 1; whereas if it were meant of God's being brought into our favour, it should have been said, *God hath peace with us*, and that God hath access to us.

3. Justification is the effect and consequent of this reconciliation. And this Crellius confesses, **justificatio est effectus reconciliationis*. But this is the act of God, *Rom.* 4. 5. & 8. 33.

4. Reconciliation is here attributed to the death of Christ, as a distinct cause from that of *conversion*; *If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son*, *Rom.* 5. 10; that is the *reconciliatio impetrata*, which in the second expression of our actual or applied reconciliation, is ascribed to the life of Christ or intercession; that being the end for which he lives in heaven, *Heb.* 7. 25.

5. We are said to *receive the atonement*, which is the same with *receiving forgiveness of sins*, *Acts* 10. 43. But to receive conversion is a phrase not at all used in scripture. When a man turns to the east, no man saith he receives turning to the east. Besides if it were meant of bringing God into our favour, it were more proper to say, God received the atonement, and not we.

6. † If by reconciliation were meant our bending

* Respon. ad. Grot, de satisf. cap. 7. p. 391.

† Camero Prælect. p. 142. col. 2.

our hearts to *love* God, there could not be any sufficient reason rendered, why the sanctification of the heart should be laid down by the apostle as the end of this reconciliation, as it is, *Yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unreplicable in his sight, Col. 1. 22.* For nothing can be both *medium* and *finis sui ipsius*, its own end and means too.

By reconciliation is meant the *whole* work of redemption. The scripture hath various terms for our recovery by Christ, which all amount to one thing; but imply the variety of our misery by sin, and the full proportion of the remedy to all our capacities in that misery. Our fall put us under various relations, our Saviour hath cut those knots, and tied new ones of a contrary nature. It is called reconciliation as it respects us as enemies, salvation as it respects us in a state of damnation, propitiation as we are guilty, redemption as captives and bound over to punishment. Reconciliation, justification, and adoption differ thus; in reconciliation God is considered as the supreme Lord and the injured party, and man is considered as an enemy that hath wronged him; in justification God is considered as a Judge, and man as guilty; in adoption God is considered as a Father, and man as an alien. Reconciliation makes us friends, justification makes us righteous, adoption makes us heirs.

This verse then represents to us the doctrine of redemption under the term of reconciliation. In it we have—I. The principal author and spring of this reconciliation, *God*. II. The immediate efficient or the meritorious cause of it, *Christ*. III. The subjects, God and the world, the world to himself. IV. The form of this reconciliation, or the fruit of it: *Not imputing their trespasses* unto them, not charging them with their crimes. V. The instrumental cause of actual reconcilement, the *ministry* of the word.

The observations we may take notice of are these.

First, Reconciliation by Christ is the *foundation* of the regeneration of nature ; *All things are become new, and all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ*, ver. 17, 18. The design of God was to reduce us to happiness, which was not to be done without the satisfaction of his justice. Christ by his death satisfies that ; in his life is a model of our sanctification : God is first the God of peace, before he be the God of sanctification ; *And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly*, 1 Thess. 5. 23. The destruction of the enmity of our nature was founded upon the removing the enmity in God : there had been no sanctification of our natures, had there not been a redemption of our persons, no more than for devils, who remain unholy, because they remain unreconciled. Besides, since God has been at peace with us he will sanctify us, that the actual peace may be preserved by the weeding out the remainders of the enmity in our natures. It is as he is a God of peace that he conquers any of our spiritual enemies. He will never engage in the *bruising Satan under our feet*, till he be our reconciled God in Christ ; *The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet*, Rom. 16. 20.

Secondly, God does not act principally as a Creator, but as a *reconcilable* God ever since the first promise. All blessings flow from him as standing in that relation. All his providences in keeping up the world, the fruitful showers, the enjoyments of the sons of men in the world, are upon the account of the Mediator, wherein he hath declared himself a reconciling God. He acts towards the world as a reconciling God, towards believers as reconciled. He is reconcilable as long as he is inviting and keeps men alive in a state of probation. But he is not reconciled but to those that accept of the way of reconciliation which he hath wrought in his Son, and according to

the methods whereby he wrought it. The relation of a Creator cannot cease while there is any creature ; but if God should act towards the world only as Creator, the dissolution of the world had been long ago, because the law of the creation had been transgressed. But he acts as a *faithful Creator*, as a Creator according to the promise of the new covenant which his faithfulness respects, 1 *Pet.* 4. 19.

Thirdly, And that which I only intend, is this,— that God is the great *spring and author* of our recovery. Or God was *principally* engaged in the whole undertaking and effecting of our redemption and reconciliation by Christ. God was the first mover in those acts whereby the first foundation stone was laid, and the building reared. All was begun by his order, and managed by his direction and influence; *All things are of God who hath reconciled*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 18 ; i. e. all things are of God in this reconciling act. The whole Trinity is concerned in it. Each person acts a distinct part ; the glory of contriving is appropriated to the Father, as he that made the first motion, counselled Christ to undertake it, sent him in the fulness of time, and bruised him upon the cross, making his soul an offering for sin. The glory of effecting it is ascribed to the second person, both in the satisfactory part to the justice of God, and also in the victorious part the conquest of Satan : the glory of working the conditions upon which it is to be enjoyed, and the applying it, is attributed wholly to the Spirit.

The story of the creation seems to intimate some other work to be done in the world by God, besides that work of creation which God the Father made at that time ; *And on the seventh day God ended the work which he had made ; and rested from all his work which he had made*, *Gen.* 2. 2. *And rested from all the work which God created and made*, ver. 3 ; thrice repeated, he rested from that work which he had made, he made no more of that kind and nature.

But a rest he could not find ; he rested from it, but not in it ; there was a work of a nobler strain behind to be made by him for his rest ; he foresaw how soon he should be disturbed by the entrance of sin ; and though he rested from making any more creatures of that sort, yet he had works of grace to make afterwards more wonderful than those of nature. He had a further display to make of his gracious perfections, which could not be decyphered on the face of that creation ; but a work there was remaining, wherein he intended to bring forth the glory of his divine excellency which yet lay hid. This is the highest draught of divine wisdom and goodness ; therefore if the Father created all things wherein his wisdom and goodness appears in a shadowy manner, drawn with fainter colours ; he would have no less hand in this, wherein his wisdom was to appear without a veil, in its full lustre and eternally durable colours, when this material world shall pass away : a mighty variety of * wisdom, which delights the Creator and amazes the creature !

He would no less have a hand in the second creation of all things by Christ, than he had in the first, since a greater glory was to redound to him as reconciling than as creating, by how much it is more excellent to give man a happy being than to give a man a bare being. God is therefore said to be the *head of Christ*, 1 Cor. 11. 3, as Christ is the head of man ; as man was made to declare the glory of Christ, so is Christ formed to declare the glory of God : as all influences the members receive in point of direction and motion are from the head, so all the influences Christ had were from God as the head directing and moving him ; as the head counsels what the members act, so God counsels what Christ acts. God brings forth this Mediator as his divine image, and diffuses all his perfections in and through him before the eyes of

* Eph. 3. 10. πολυποίκιλος σοφία.

men, and thought it a work too worthy to be contrived by any but himself, and transacted by any but his Son. God only sent him to make it, and called him back to himself as soon as ever he had finished it.

We shall consider here, 1. What reconciliation is, and wherein the nature of it consists. 2. That God the Father is and must be the prime cause of this. 3. Wherein the agency of the Father appears and by what acts it is manifested in this transaction. 4. The use.

First. *What reconciliation is.*

1. Reconciliation implies that there was a *former friendship*. There were once good terms between God and man; there was a time wherein they lovingly met and conversed together: man loved God and was beloved by him, till he left his first love, and broke out into rebellion against him. God pronounced all his creatures *good*, and man at the last *very good* with an emphasis. A God of infinite goodness could not hate his creature which was an extract of his own image: man had the law of God engraven upon his heart, and therefore could not in that state hate God, while he was guided by that law of righteousness and exact goodness in himself. Thus was man God's favourite above all creatures of the lower world, styled his son, *Luke 3. 38*: but how quickly did he prove a parricide, and a quarrel was commenced between God and him? Now reconciliation is piecing up a broken amity, and a reglutination of those affections which were disjoined. And the miracle of this reconciliation made by God in Christ excels the former friendship; that might be broken off, as we find by woful experience it was. This as to some acts and fruits may be interrupted, not abolished; as the beams of the sun may be clouded, but the influence of the sun cannot be eclipsed. Then God and man were not so closely united but they might be parted, now God and the believers are so affectionately knit, that they cannot be separated.

2. Reconciliation implies an *enmity and hatred*, or at least a disgust on one or both sides. Adam was created in a state of God's favour, but not long after his creation he apostatized to corruption; by his creation a child of God's love, by his corruption a child of God's wrath: while he stood he was the possessor of paradise and heir of heaven, when he fell, God seals a lease of ejection and man becomes an heir of hell; he turns rebel and joins with Satan, God's greatest enemy; God took the forfeiture of his possession, turns him out of house and home, and hinders his re-entrance by a *flaming sword* turning every way to keep his fingers off from the tree of life, or hope of felicity upon the former score, *Gen. 3. ult.* Man invaded God's right of sovereignty, and God of a sovereign Father becomes a punishing Judge. Man falls into sin, and wrath falls upon man, sin separated between God and him, and unsheathed the flaming sword.

Thus are heaven and earth at variance. The hatred is mutual; God hates men not as his creatures, but sinners; man hates God, not as God, but as Sovereign and Judge: man turned off God from being his Lord, and God turned off man from being his favourite: man vents his serpentine poison against God, God pours out his wrathful anger on man. On man's part this enmity is by sin, on the part of God. (1.) From the *righteousness of his nature*, since he *cannot behold iniquity* without indignation, *Hab. 1. 13.* As he cannot but love goodness, so he cannot but hate iniquity; He *hates and abhors all the workers of iniquity*, *Psal. 5. 5, 6.* He hates the sins of his saints, though not their persons; he hates the persons of wicked men, not primarily, but for their sin. (2.) From the *righteousness of his law* made against sin, whereby he cannot but according to his veracity punish it. His curses must be executed, his law vindicated, and his justice satisfied; truth and fidelity to his law, his nature, his justice engageth him.

Since there is nothing of the life of God in us naturally, there can be nothing of the love of God to us; for what affection can the Deity have to brutishness? and infinite purity to loathsomeness? Now there having been such an enmity, man is properly said to be reconciled; good angels cannot properly be said to be reconciled, because there was no difference between God and them. It is a question, because believers are said to be reconciled, and reconciliation implying a former hatred, whether God hated believers *before* their conversion? In answer to this,

1. To say God *hated* them fully *before*, and *loves* them *now*, would argue a mutability in God, which the apostle excludes; *He is the Father of light*, who is so far from having any real change, that he hath not a shadow of it, *Jam. 1. 17.* If he did not love his elect before Christ died for them, and loves them afterwards, then there is a change in his will; for to love them is nothing else but to will eternal life to them, and for God to hate any, is not to will eternal life to be their inheritance. If God did so hate his elect before Christ's death, as to will that they should not inherit eternal life at all, and after Christ's death did will that they should, his will would then be inconsistent and changeable. If God chose them from eternity, he loved them from eternity; *If he chose them in Christ as their head, Eph. 1. 4,* he loved them in Christ as their head; he could not choose them to eternal life in those methods without loving them; as he loved Christ the head before he died for those that were to be his members, so he loved those that were to be his members before they were actually engrafted in him. As he loved Christ as Mediator before he was actually sacrificed, so he loved his chosen ones before they were actually reconciled. When Christ came to reconcile, he came to do God's will, and when any soul is actually reconciled, it is not a change in God's will, but the performance of God's eternal will.

2. There is a change in the *creature*, but that does

not imply a change in God. It is not a new will in God, but a new state in the creature. The creation adds no new relation or accident, but a change and effect in the creature. And as the schools generally determine, it is one thing *mutare voluntatem*, another thing *velle mutationem*; as a master commands a servant this work one day, another work another day; the master changes not his will, but wills a change in his work: or as some illustrate it, as a physician prescribes his patient one sort of medicine one day and another the next; the physician does not change his will, but wills a change. As a man hath a mind to adopt a poor child to be his son, affection is the ground of this resolution. But he lets him for a while run about in rags, and seems to take no notice of his misery; yet at length takes him, and clothes him, and adopts him: there is a change in the state of this child, but not in the affection, the original of it. There was a change in the prodigal when he returned, but not in the father when he embraced him; *My son which was lost is found: it was a new finding of the son, but not a new affection in the father.*

Well, but how may God be said to *love* or *hate* believers before their actual reconciliation, since he is the author of it?

God loves them with a *love of purpose*. God loves them with a love of purpose or election, but, till grace be wrought, not with a love of acceptation; we are within the love of his purpose, as we are designed to be the servants of Christ, not within the love of his acceptation till we are actually the servants of Christ; *Serveth Christ, and is acceptable to God*, Rom. 14. 18. They are alienated from God while in a state of nature, and not accepted by God till in a state of grace. There is in God a love of good will, and a love of delight: *Amor benevolentia*, seu ἐνδοκίας, *Amor complacentia* seu ἐναρεσίας. The love of good will, is love in the root; the love of delight, is love in the flower. The

love of good will looks upon us afar off, the love of delight ins itself in us, draws near to us. By peace with God we have access to God, by his love of delight he hath access to us. God wills well to them before grace, but is not well pleased with them till grace. Christ is the effect of his love of benevolence and compassion to relieve us, which love ordered Christ as the means, *John* 3. 16 ; but Christ is the cause of that love of friendship wherewith God loves us.

A king hath a kindness for a prisoner in his bonds, and sends some to clothe him : but he has no delight in him to think him fit for his embraces, till he be delivered both from his fetters and his misery. An elect person is not simply beloved before his actual reconciliation, because he has no gracious quality which may be the object of that love. Neither is he simply hated, for if so, how could he have any gracious habits infused into him whereby he may be made the object of delight? It cannot be denied but that God intends to bestow supernatural gifts upon those he hath chosen, else wherein does his love consist? And it cannot be conceived how a simple hatred can consist with such an intention. He loves them to make them his friends, and after reconciliation he loves them as his friends. It is love in God to make an object for his love. God loves an object qualified with grace, therefore to qualify an object so as to make it lovely, argues love in God to that object he so qualifies ; love in intention before the qualification. Hatred could never be the foundation and cause of that qualification ; yea, the gift of Christ, which is the effect, doth suppose the love of God which is the cause.

God indeed was angry with all mankind, but it was an anger mixed with love ; he was angry but yet willing to be appeased ; a pregnant example of this, which may give us an understanding of it, we have from the mouth of God himself ; *My wrath is kindled*

against thee (speaking to Eliphaz) *and against thy two friends, therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering, Job 42. 7, 8.* There is a cloud upon God's face, but his mercy, as the sun, shines out behind the cloud; as he acquaints them with his anger, so he shows them the way to pacify it. Though his wrath was kindled, yet he is not so ready to inflame it, as he is to have it quenched by the means he prescribes them, wherein Job was a type of Christ, whose sacrifice God only accepts as well as appoints. There is no love of complacency either in the persons or services of any, but as considered in Christ the reconciler satisfying the justice of God. When an elect person is engrafted in Christ, that love which was bubbling in the fountain from eternity, flows out in the streams.

God *hates* his elect in *some sense* before their actual reconciliation. God was placable before Christ, appeased by Christ. But till there be such conditions which God hath appointed in the creature, he hath no interest in this reconciliation of God; and whatsoever person he be, in whom the condition is not found, he remains under the wrath of God, and therefore is in some sense under God's hatred.

(1.) God does not hate their *persons*, nor any natural or moral *good in them*. Nor indeed the persons of any creature; for, as persons, they are his own work; the creation was good in God's eye at the first framing, and whatsoever of goodness remains, is still affected by an unchangeable being, for infinite and unbounded goodness cannot hate that which is good either naturally or morally. Christ loved that morality he saw in the young man. God loves their moral qualities, and they are the common gifts of his Spirit, and qualities wherewith he has endowed them; as their primitive natures were good, so what approaches nearest to that nature, has some tincture of goodness, and therefore hath some amiableness in

the eye of God. But he took no pleasure in them, neither in their persons nor services, as acceptable to him without the Son of his love.

(2.) God hates their *sins*. Sin is always odious to God, let the person be what it will: God never hated, nor ever could, the person of Christ, yet he hated and testified in the highest measure his hatred of those iniquities he stood charged with as our Surety. The father could not but hate the practices of a prodigal, though he loved his person. God loves nothing but himself, and other things as they are like himself, and in order to himself; therefore God must needs hate whatsoever is contrary to his immaculate purity, and different from his image. He hates the sins of believers, though pardoned and mortified; though his mercy pardons them, his holiness can never love them; though the punishment be removed from the person, yet the nature and sinfulness is not taken from the sin. Much more does God hate the sins of his unconverted elect, which are neither pardoned nor mortified: if he hates sin in its weakness, much more in its strength. He hates their sins objectively: that is the object of, and the only object of his hatred; their persons *terminative*, as the effects of his wrath terminate in their persons. Though sin is the object of God's hatred, as being a contrariety to his holy law, yet it is not the object of his wrath, but the person sinning; actions are not immediately punished, neither can, but the persons so acting. In that respect God may be said to hate the persons of men, and of his elect before conversion, as the effects of his wrath do terminate in them.

(3.) God hates their *state*. Though God loves morality in men, yet that does not include the acceptance of their persons, or of their moral acts, or any love to their state; though Christ loved the young man's morality, yet he could not love his state, since it was at some distance from the kingdom of heaven, though not so great a distance as others were from it.

The elect, before their conversion, are in a state of enmity, a state of darkness, a state of ignorance, and a state of slavery, and that state is odious to God, and makes them incapable, while in that state, to *inherit the kingdom of God*; *Such were some of you*, such sinners, and in such a state of sin that could *not inherit the kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10, 11. A man that has a love to a beggarly child, and intends to adopt him, he loves his person, but hates his present state of vileness and beggary; and when he actually adopts him, changes his state, his relation, and divests him of his filthiness. The state of the elect before actual reconciliation is odious, because it is a state of alienation from God; whatsoever grows up from the root of the old Adam, cannot be delightful to him.

(4.) God hates them as to the *withholding the effects of his love*. We call the effects of God's grace, grace; and the effects of God's wrath, wrath. So God may be said to hate an elect person before his conversion, because being in that state a child of wrath, the wrath of God abides on him, and the curses of the law are in force against him. As God is said to repent, when he withholds those judgments and effects of his anger which he had threatened against a nation; so God may be said to be angry, and to hate, when he pours out vials of wrath, and also when he withholds the fruits and proper effects of love.

3. Though God be the prime author of this reconciliation, yet no man is actually reconciled to God, till he *complies with those conditions whereupon God offers it*. *God was in Christ* when he was reconciling the world, we must be in Christ if we be reconciled to God; he in a way of direction, we in a way of dependence. Till a man believes, though God has been reconciling the world in Christ, yet he is not under the actual peace with God, though under the offers of this peace. *The wrath of God abides on him*, as well as the offers of peace are proposed to him:

otherwise what need had the apostle to beseech men to be reconciled to God, upon the account that he was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, if there were not something to be done by us in order to it. *We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God,* ver. 20.

To what purpose should we be exhorted to lay down our arms, discard our enmity, offer up our weapons, if nothing were to be done on our parts? It is true, God is in Christ *reconciling the world, not imputing their trespases unto them.* But to whom? To all the world without any distinction? Though the offers are made to all, yet while men accept not of them, sin will be imputed to the unbelieving world; shall we think God will recede from his anger till we recede from our sins? What rebels can be said to be reconciled to their prince, till they observe the conditions in his proclamation? Christ cannot present men as friends, till by faith they are united to him; for though there be an accomplishment of the general reconciliation in the death of Christ, yet there is no benefit accruing to us till full union by faith.

Much less can man be said to be reconciled from eternity; the apostle cuts off that conceit, *Yet now hath he reconciled,* Col. 1. 21; now, not before; if it were from eternity, the Colossians were never enemies to God: if always reconciled, the apostle speaks a falsehood; for to be enemies and friends at the same time, implies a contradiction; to be reconciled from eternity, and yet but now, are inconsistent. Alas! we come into the world with the badge of God's wrath upon us, and our backs turned upon God, the first thing we do is to kick against him. Reconciliation in the decree is from eternity; but we cannot more properly be said to be reconciled from eternity because of that, than to be created, and born from eternity, because decreed to come upon the stage of the world in time. Reconciliation in the purchase is temporary; we were reconciled meritoriously at the time of

Christ's death, but no more actually reconciled, than we can be said to be born when Adam was created, because we were in him as a cause.

Reconciliation particular and actual is temporary ; we have then God appeased towards us, when we can by faith hold upon his Son upon the cross, and with a hearty sincere faith plead the wounds of the Redeemer, the sorrows in his soul as a propitiation for sin, an atonement of God's own appointment. It is not sin, but the sinner is reconciled. God will hold an eternal antipathy to sin, as sin does to God ; God will never be pacified towards sin, though he will towards the sinner. He is in Christ reconciling the world, not sin in the world, to himself ; Let none therefore build false conceits upon this doctrine. We must distinguish between reconciliation *designed* by God, *obtained* by Christ, *offered* by the gospel, *received* by the soul.

4. This reconciliation on God's part in and by Christ, is very *congruous for the honour* of God, and absolutely necessary for us.

(1.) For the honour of God. For the honour of his *wisdom*. Had not a Mediator been appointed, mankind had been destroyed at the beginning of his sin : God had lost the glory of his present works, and his wisdom would seem to lie under a disparagement in publishing a rest from his works, and pronouncing them good, when the very same day (as some think) they should be sullied with an universal spot, and the choicest part of the lower creation turned back upon God, and all the other creatures employed to base and unworthy ends, below their creation and contrary to the honour of their Creator. Without the appointment of a reconciler, the honour of God in creation had been impaired, the creation had been in vain : no creatures could have attained the true end of their creation ; since man, whom they were designed to serve, had apostatized from the service of his and their Creator, they could not be employed by him in that

state for the service they were ultimately intended for.

Reconciliation is also necessary for the honour of his *truth and justice*. Since God had decreed and enacted, that whosoever sinned should die, God must either upon man's sin destroy him to preserve his truth and justice, or neglect his own law, and turn it upside down for the discovery of his mercy. These things were impossible to the nature of God; he must be true to himself, just to his law. If justice then should destroy, what way was there to discover his mercy. If God should restore man to his friendship, without any consideration, where would be the honour of his justice, the firmness of his truth in his threatening? The wisdom of God finds a way for the honour of both, whereby he preserves the righteousness of his law, and the counsel of his mercy, not by changing the sentence against sin, but the person; and laying that upon his Son as our surety, which we by the rigour of the law were to endure in our own persons, whereby justice was satisfied with the punishment due to the sinner, and mercy was satisfied with the merit due to our Saviour.

(2.) *Necessary for us.* Necessary since all men had breathed in the contagion of Adam, had his corrupt blood, and the poison of the old serpent diffused in their veins; and being thus enemies to God, became subject to wrath and the eternal malediction of the law, necessary at the very first defection; had there not been an advocate to interpose, we cannot conceive how, according to the methods of the established law, God could have borne one moment with the world; there was as much necessity for some extraordinary remedy against the biting of the old serpent, as against the bitings of the fiery ones in the wilderness, which could not be cured by any natural means. They must have inevitably perished under their venom, and man under his. If we come to God in ourselves, what are we but as criminals before a

judge, stubble before fire? God is infinitely good, i. e. infinitely contrary to evil ; and if to evil, then to us, who think, speak, act nothing but evil. The justice of God upon man's sin, required that man should endure an infinite punishment ; and because he could not endure a punishment *intensely* infinite, by reason of the limitedness of his nature, as a finite creature, therefore he was to endure a punishment *extensively* infinite in regard of duration, whereof he was capable by reason of the immortality of his soul. Since things stood thus, the fallen creature could not be restored to felicity, till some way were found out to restore the amity, with a full satisfaction to both, that God might without any dishonour to himself and his law, rejoice in his creature ; that the creature might, with a firm security, rejoice again in God. The * *will* of God is an evidence of the necessity of it : why did God ordain it, if it had not been necessary ? The natural inclination and will of Christ, as man, was contrary to it ; for he in the flesh desired *this cup might pass from him*. How then should the infinite wisdom of God, the infinite affection to his Son, put him upon that which was ignominious ; and the infinite wisdom of the Son consent to such an event without an apparent necessity ?

* Daille Sermon, sur resurrec. pag. 226.

PART II.

GOD ALONE THE AUTHOR OF RECONCILIATION.

He must needs be the author of it—He alone is the author of it—No creature could be the author of it—If he were not the author of it, it could not be valid—Why no other could be the author of reconciliation—The style of scripture—All spiritual blessings from the Father—The order and foundation of election—His design in creating the world—The subject of his thoughts in all ages of the world.

THE SECOND thing we are to consider is,

That God the Father *must needs be, and is*, the author of this reconciliation.

1. That God *must needs be* the author of this work. Reconciliation in all the parts and degrees of it, in all the model and frame of it, is his act. The first invention of this way, the first proposition, the last execution and acceptation, owns him for the author. To him we must needs owe the contrivance, declaration, and accomplishment. If God be the first cause in all things, he is the first cause in the highest of his works. Nothing comes to pass in time, but what was decreed in eternity. If any thing were done which he did not first know, he were not infinitely wise; if any thing were done which he did not first will, positively or permissively, he were not

infinitely supreme and powerful. All things are wrought by his counsel, which is the act of his understanding ; all things are wrought by his will, which is the act of his sovereignty : by God in scripture sometimes is meant the Father by way of eminence, because he is the fountain of Deity ; *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Eph. 1. 11. & 1. 3.*

[1.] No creature could be the original author of this work.

(1.) *All human nature* could not first invent it. The whole wisdom of Moses and the Jewish nation in the wilderness, could not find a remedy against the bitings of the fiery serpents, which indeed were so venomous that they were absolutely mortal. And if they were the *presteres*, as the Greeks call them, which word signifies the same that the Hebrew *burning serpents*, no remedy was found against their venom for many ages after : in the time of the Romans' * flourishing, the poison suddenly inflamed the blood, puffed up the skin, disfigured the countenance, deprived them of the shape of men, with the benefit of life : an exact representation of the misery of man by the Fall. No remedy could be found in nature, against this evil in the figure, no more can any against the evil represented by it : neither the languishing law of nature, nor the sickly philosophy of the heathens, could ever find a cure.

The reconciliation of God to man was too stupendous a work, for the joint wit and wisdom of man to arrive at. Man was so plunged in the sink of lapsed nature, that he knew not how to desire it : so amiable were his dreams of happiness in his rebellion, that he had no mind to cherish any thoughts of it. He was so furious in his unjust war against God, that he had no will to accept of any such motion. The world was filled with all unrighteousness, and men were *haters of God, Rom. 1. 29, 30.* By all their wisdoms

* Lucan, *Pharsal. lib. 9.*

they *knew him not*, 1 Cor. 1. 21. They had no mind to know God, no will to be at peace with him.

Had the wisdom of the world been sensible of their deplorable condition, could it have contrived a way for the glorifying his mercy without invading the rights of his justice, they might have dreamed of a pardon from his mercy as the supreme Governor; but how would the contentment of his justice as eminent a perfection in God as that of his mercy, and the stability of his truth in his threatening have insuperably puzzled them? The difficulty lay not upon the point of mercy, every day's sun, and every seasonable shower, were rich discoveries of this: but there was no direction in the other case, to be read in the whole manuscript of nature.

The heavens declare the glory of God as Creator, not as reconciler; they discovered his glory, not any way of entrance into it. If they had thoughts of accomplishing it by a surety between God and them, where could they have pitched upon one worthy of God's acceptance? If they could have found out, and proposed one, what tie was there upon God to accept any other offer for the offenders, but to exact it of their own persons? What man could have thought of such an extensive love, as the reconciliation not of one or two particular men, but of the world, by so strange a means as the death of God's own Son?

We read indeed of some one or two of the heathen philosophers, that declared an impossibility of the world's reformation without God's taking flesh, but none imagined any thing of the death of the Son of God; no not the Jews, but here and there one of their Rabbies long before his coming. O the immense grace of God! to discover that to us in his gospel, which all the wisdom of fallen nature might have fruitlessly studied to eternity! As no man can frame an universal law, accommodated to the several states and tempers of all the men in the world, and to those

notions of fit and just in the minds of men, but God, who knows what life has engraven upon men's minds; so none but God can know how to find a way of redemption, that may answer the glory of all his attributes, and the pressing urgency of men's necessities.

(2.) But might not the unblemished wisdom of angels, out of pity to mankind, *have found out a way of reconciliation?* They knew much more of God, than man; they knew the wonders of his goodness, yet had seen many of their own order drop into hell under his wrath. They might know that the devils, a stronger nature, could not satisfy God for their offence; much less man, the weaker nature. They would never have stood gazing upon it with astonishment, when it was revealed, had it been so obvious to their clear and comprehensive reasons: the greatest learning they have in it, is *by the church*; *To the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be made known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God*; Eph. 3. 10, *objectively, not efficienter.*

It was a mystery hid in God, and only in him: not an angel seems to have had any thoughts of it, till the revelation of it was made to the church. *Now*, not before; all the angels in heaven were ignorant of it, and probably understood not the meaning of the first promise in Paradise, till the coming of Christ in the flesh: yea, after the revelation, those intelligent spirits have not a perfect knowledge of the whole scope of the gospel-state; for they *desire to look into those things*; they could never be inventors of, or consulters in, that which they did not understand. Well then, angels and men may admire it when revealed, but not before imagine it; they may applaud it, but never contrive it. Which of them could presume to nourish such a thought, that the Father should call out his eternal Son, to be a temporary sufferer, to veil his divinity with the rags of an afflicted humanity? What then was impossible to the

approved wisdom of men and angels, must only be ascribed to the wisdom and grace of God.

[2.] God the *Father* must needs be the principal in this business.

(1.) The order of the Trinity requires it. There is an order in the operation, as well as the subsistence of the Three Persons. As the Son is from the Father in order of subsistence, so the actions of the Son are from the Father in order of motion and direction. The Son is sent by the Father, not only as man, but as God; for the Spirit, that hath only a divine nature, is said to be sent by the Father and the Son. The persons are all equal; *Christ thought it no robbery to be equal with God, Phil. 2. 6*; yet one operation is appropriated to the Father, another to the Son, another to the Holy Ghost, in regard of order; and the Father, as he is the fountain of the deity, is the fountain of all divine operation; as the sun is the fountain of its beams, so it is the fountain of all the operation of its beams. All things are of the Father by the Son. *He created all things by Jesus Christ, Eph. 3. 9. 2 Cor. 5. 18.* All things of the Father as the fountain, by the Son as the medium. There is a priority of order in the divine paternity upon the account of generation; and this order is observed in the divine institutions; baptism is first in the name of *the Father*, then of *the Son*, then of *the Holy Ghost, Matt. 28. 19.* Now it is most congruous, that as the Father was the original of our Saviour's person, so he should be of his office: as he was God of his substance, so he should be Mediator of his will; the Father first sets the copy, after which the Son writes. *The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father do, for what things soever he doth, those also doth the Son likewise, John 5. 15.*

All operations begin first from the Father; this place the ancient fathers understood of Christ as the second person, not as Mediator. If the first motion

came from Christ, the order of working in the Trinity would be inverted ; the Father would then do what he sees the Son do, the Son would be the director, the preceptor, and the Father the follower ; the Son would go before in proposal, and the Father follow after in consent. God would not then be the God of order in heaven. Besides, the love of the Father would not then be the principal cause of our redemption, upon which the scripture every where places it, but the love of the Son. Nay, if the authority of constituting the Mediator were not in the Father by way of order, there could be little or no testimony of his love since the fall of man.

To imagine therefore any other root of our redemption, is to contradict the order of the Trinity. But this is agreeable to our conceptions of things as far as we can apprehend such mysteries. The Father from himself, Christ from the Father, the Spirit from both ; so the Father contrives this, and is pleased with it, as being the exactest model of his love, wisdom, and justice, and the highest act of love he could shew to his Son : the Son consents to it, and is pleased with it, as being the highest act of love he could shew to his Father, and to men, in being their Reconciler ; and to angels in being their Head. The Spirit is pleased with gifting him, as being the greatest demonstration of his power to gift Christ for so great a work, therefore the Spirit is said to *rest upon him*, *Isa.* 11. 8. Not only noting the continuance of the Spirit on him, but the satisfaction the Spirit should have in this employment, as much in gifting Christ for it, as Christ in undertaking and managing the work.

[3.] If the Father were not principal in it, the undertaking a reconciliation could not of *itself* be *valid*.

(1.) There had been an *injury to the Father* in undertaking it, without his *full consent* at least. The Father is the principal party injured, and was there-

fore to be consulted with in that which concerned his own right. He is also the Governor of the world. It is not convenient that a public work should be undertaken in a nation without the consent of the chief magistrate, who may else make it frustrate. When princes of equal dignity are at war, none undertakes the composing of the quarrel, till both parties accept of the mediation. But here is the supreme Lord of the world and ungrateful rebels at variance; the chief governor unjustly wronged. Now every man would judge it a presumption for any to offer terms of peace to his enemies and undertake the satisfaction of himself without his own consent in the case.

(2.) The Father could only by right *appoint the terms* upon which, and the *way whereby*, this reconciliation should be made. The Father being the law-maker, could only dispense with his law, and judge what satisfaction was fit for the vindication of it. The law ran in that strain, that the party sinning should die; had the letter of the law been exacted, every man had been a stranger to salvation; the right therefore of waving the letter of the law, while he maintained the reason and substance of it, belonged to the Father. As the supreme Governor too, he could only transfer the punishment from the offending party to another that was willing to stand under the penalty in his stead. Since creation is appropriated to the Father, and sin entered upon the world immediately after the creation, it was God as a Creator was principally injured. The first sin struck more immediately at the Father, as Creator; unbelief at the second person, the Redeemer; and a despiteful contempt of Christ, after the manifestation of him by the Spirit, and the motions pressing upon men, is called the sin against the *Holy Ghost*. Christ intimates this, when he saith, *They have both hated me and my Father*, i. e. me now as well as my Father before. Now they shew a particular hatred to me

by unbelief, as well as they have done to my Father formerly by idolatry.

The Father therefore only had the right to appoint the way of reconciliation according to his good pleasure; since he was chiefly dishonoured, he is fittest to prescribe the method which he judges most convenient for the restitution of his honour; as all his attributes were wronged by sin, so it was fit all his attributes should be glorified in reconciliation of his enemies; it was not fit that glory he is so jealous of, should be intrusted in any hands, but by his own will: and his prescribing all the ways of vindicating and illustrating it, and the glorifying of himself, was his end, in appointing Christ to this work; *Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified*; and the glory of God seems to be a name whereby Christ is called, *Isa. 49. 3. The glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, Isa. 60. 1.* Since therefore a greater glory was his end in redemption than barely in creation, he had as much a right to be principal in the miracle of restoration, as in that of creation.

(3.) The Father was *not obliged*, nor *could be obliged* by any, to entertain any thoughts of a reconciliation. He might without any prejudice to his goodness, have demolished this defiled world, and by his power reared another wherein to shew forth the glory of his immense perfections; he might have made good the law upon the person of every sinner; much less was he bound to accept of any surety; he might have exacted the satisfaction at the hands of the criminal, before he would have been reconciled. Being Sovereign, it was at his liberty whether he would be appeased or no toward rebels. If he was willing to be appeased, he might have chosen whether he would have admitted of any surety to stand in their place. When Reuben offered Jacob his two sons as a pledge for Benjamin, Jacob was not bound to receive this offer, but at his liberty whether he would take them or no. Nor was Naboth bound to part with his

vineyard for a better than his own upon Ahab's offer. No man is bound to part with his propriety in his goods, or his right over his prisoner; but if a price be agreed upon, he is then bound by the rules of commutative justice to set the prisoner at liberty.

(4.) Therefore if the Son of God himself had been incarnate, and died for the world without the Father's *call and mission*, the Father was not *obliged to accept it* as the price of our redemption. For all things without a call are of themselves invalid, and depend only upon the will of the person to whom they are related for their acceptance. God's institution confers validity upon any thing. Could the brazen serpent ever have cured the bitings of the fiery ones, had not God fixed it as a remedy?

Three things go to the establishing the reconciliation. 1. The dignity of the person reconciling. 2. The valuableness of the satisfaction he offers. 3. The call of the person injured, or the acceptance of it.

The two first make the merit *sufficient*, the third only makes it *accepted*. Had Christ endured all the torments of the cross the acceptance of him for us might not have been, had not the Father's constitution of him for that purpose preceded his undertaking. Though the death of Christ had an intrinsic value, and therefore was in itself acceptable, yet the consent of the Father only made it accepted; he *made us accepted* in Christ; therefore our acceptance depends first upon the acceptance of Christ, *Eph. 1. 6*. The strength therefore of it in scripture is put upon God's well-pleasedness with him; *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*. And upon God's call of him, it was his will, the *good pleasure of his will*, and *purposed in himself*, *Eph. 1. 9*; it rose up in his own heart and mind. Though the satisfaction of Christ derives not its virtue of meriting from the grace of God, yet it derives its acceptance from the grace of God.

The grace of God, and the merit of Christ, relate to one another, as the cause and the effect ; the antecedent and the consequent. The merit of Christ is the cause of our actual favour with God, but the merit of Christ is not the first spring of it ; for it is subordinate to the general grace of God, which orders it as a means of that reconciliation which he purposed in himself. In short, it is like this case ; When a man desires the goods of another, and offers him as much they are worth, and more ; though what he offers hath an intrinsic value to compensate the possessor for those goods, whether the person accept of that offer or no, yet the acceptance of it depends purely upon his will ; and the sum hath no validity to purchase what is desired, without the will of the present possessor.

(1.) If the Father had been *obliged* to receive any satisfaction it must be *from the person offending*. No obligation can be conceived incumbent upon him to receive it from a person wholly innocent, though it were of infinite value, because none can transfer over the right of another, but he whose right it is.

(2.) Had not the *Father fully agreed* to this, I do not see how Christ could have *made a compensation* by his sufferings. Had he assumed a body, and laid down that body, and courted death, had that been justifiable without a call ? The humanity of Christ was a creature, and therefore obliged by the law of nature, as creatures are, to preserve itself. All men are bound to do so, unless God calls them to lay down their lives, who is the supreme Lord of life and death. Suppose our Saviour might have laid down his life intentionally as a compensation for us, what could he have undergone in his humanity, but a temporal death ? Was it not more we were to suffer ? Was not the wrath of God due to our souls ? The soul was the chief offender : the soul then ought to be the principal sufferer : if God therefore had not appointed Christ for those ends, the wrath of God could not

have been inflicted upon the soul of Christ; for who should have inflicted it? Had it been just with God to have loaded a person with his wrath, who was innocent from any actual or imputed crime both in his own person, and transferred from others? His mere bodily sufferings, could not have been a recompence for the sin of the soul.

The order of things fairly lies thus, man being unable to satisfy God for himself, nor any creature being sufficient to satisfy God for them; the Father calls the Son to take upon him the human nature, and by satisfying his justice for sin, restores us to happiness. The Father's call, and his own voluntary consent, make him capable of having our sins transferred upon him, and bearing them in his own body on the tree. And Christ lays it upon the commandment received from his Father, together with his own free consent; *I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again, this commandment have I received from my Father, John 10. 18.* He had an authority to lay down his life, he had also a promise of restoration of it by his resurrection. And to this end he had received, not only an invitation, but a command, which gave him full authority to die, and a ground also to plead the validity of it, for the ends designed by it. Therefore had he not received such a command, he had had no authority to lay down his life; no more than Abraham had authority to sacrifice Isaac of his own head, neither could he have challenged any acceptance of it for man at the hands of God.

(3.) The scripture *grounds* the merit of Christ upon the *grace of God*. It is called the gift of God, and the *gift by grace, which by Christ hath abounded to many, Rom. 5. 15, 16, &c.* Some bring this place to prove the absolute efficiency of Christ's merit, had he laid down his life without the appointment of the Father: because as the sin of Adam had demerit enough to condemn the world, so the righteousness of

Christ had merit enough to save the world; But the question is, whence this merit did arise? It rose personally from Christ himself, and the dignity of his person: But as to the acceptation from the Father, which the apostle resolves in this place in telling us? It is the grace of God and the gift of God, because if Christ's death had a natural power of merit without any precursory agreement between the Father and the Son, it could not be said then to be the grace of God, for God could not but in a way of justice accept it.

There is a * double merit, absolute and *ex pacto* or covenanted merit. Absolute, when any good is done to a person; which in the very deed itself, obliges him for whose good it is done, to the benefactor which does it; as generation and education are the acts whereby parents merit of their children. So that whether children will or no, upon that very account that they are begotten, and brought up, they owe every thing to their parents; so creation being the work of God, the good of the creature, for that very cause every creature, especially rational, is obliged to God; and God by this act, merits all adoration, obedience, and respect from his creature.

Covenanted merit, is a work done which does not in its own nature oblige, but by virtue of some preceding compact and agreement between the person meriting, and that person of whom he merits. As when a king proposes a reward to those that run a race, let men run never so well, they have no right to demand a reward, but upon such a declaration of the prince, and supposing that edict and declaration, he that runs has a right to the reward promised and appointed by the king, but no right to a reward in general; the whole right rises not from the race simply considered, but as it respects the declaration and order of the prince. If we speak of a covenant merit,

* Chanier Tom. 3. lib. 9. cap. 19. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

Christ fully merited at the hands of God eternal salvation, for he fully performed what was agreed upon : but if we speak of absolute merit, neither Christ nor any creature could merit any thing at the hands of God, or render God obliged to them by a natural right ; no more than any man that runs a race can oblige a king by his swiftness. As the merit of Christ regards us, it is absolute ; for Christ by this very undertaking (supposing he had not had any agreement with the Father) to deliver us, and appease the wrath of God against us, he had absolutely merited of us all love and observance, yea though he had failed in it ; but he had not merited of God any thing for us, by any undoubted right, but as it respects that agreement between the Father and Son. *My goodness extends not unto thee, but to the saints which are in the earth, Ps. 16. 2.* Christ did not add any thing to God, whereby he might absolutely merit of him ; but to the saints he did, whereby they are for ever obliged to him.

Christ did not merit any thing for us at the hands of God, but as *Mediator* ; and to this office he was predestinated by God, and therefore he merited nothing but by that decree, what he did was from the office of Mediator or priest ; and because he was so, therefore he merited. As when any officers are appointed by the king, whatsoever they act by virtue of their office, has its foundation in, and force from, the royal authority. His faithfulness whereby he merited, has its validity from the appointment of him in his offices by God ; who was faithful to him that appointed him, *Heb. 2. 3.* There had been no honour accruing to him, and consequently nothing challenged by him, unless he had been *called of God* ; *No man takes this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, Heb. 5. 4.* Christ himself owns the Father to be the foundation and stability of all the salvation he wrought ; *He shall cry unto me, thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation ; also I will make him my*

first-born, higher than the kings of the earth, Psa. 89. 27. This is taken from 2 *Sam.* 7. 14, and cited, *Heb.* 1. 5, as belonging to Christ, to prove his dignity above the angels. *The rock of my salvation*, the strength and foundation of the salvation I have wrought for men ; or alluding to the rock from whence the waters flowed to the Israelites in the wilderness ; either way our Saviour owns his Father as the stability of it. This salvation, i. e. not personal but mediatory salvation.

[4.] As it could not have been valid, had not the Father been principal in it, so it must needs be principally from him, because it had not been for *his honour* that it should principally have come from *another hand*. * It was not expedient that we should be redeemed by any but God, both as to the medium of our redemption, and the grand author and contriver of it. As God created us for happiness, so we by our own fault revolted from him : to be restored to that happiness from whence we fell, is a greater good than simply to be created ; because it is more deplorable to lie under the intolerable vengeance of an infinite God, than to lie in the depth of nothing. Since therefore man's happiness consists in a blessed immortality, how much more would man be obliged to him who restores him to his lost happiness, than to him who created him in a state wherein he might fall to imperfection and misery ? Being God hath given us life, if another should bring us to a better life, without his interesting himself in it ; how much more of tender melting affection would he discover, in conferring upon us that which is more magnificent ? and we should be indebted to him for the greater, to the former for the less. If it were so honourable a thing for his goodness to create us by himself, it is no less honourable to interest himself in our restoration. It had been no honour to him to have his work restored to beauty and perfection, by any other skill and directions rather than his own. It is as much for the ho-

* Vives de vent. Fidei lib. 2. cap. 4. p. 355.

nour of the Father, to appoint a head for the restoring of the world, as he did a head for the increase of it. By that one man which he appointed, the root of mankind, a blot came upon the world ; it were not honourable for him to have another head stand up, for re-investing man in a nobler happiness, without his appointment.

Considering that in this work there is a discovery of the dearest love and profoundest wisdom, therefore the Father, the principal person in the Deity, must needs be the principal author and director ; otherwise the principal glory of these perfections would not belong to the principal person. First, herein is *love*. If the first motion came not from him, it would represent him an hard master, negligent of the good of his creature, without compassions, and only won by the importunities of his Son to have pity towards us. It would represent him only with thunders and vengeance, and the Son with mercy and grace ; the greatest honour would redound to the Son, and the Son would deserve more honour than the Father, whereas the honour upon the account of mediation is equally due to both ; *That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, John 5. 23.* The Father is to be honoured for the greatness of his love, in committing his right of judging to the Son ; as the Son is to be honoured for undertaking, so the Father is to be honoured for sending him. *He that honours not the Son, honours not the Father which hath sent him.* The sending Christ is the ground of the honour due to the Father in the work of redemption.

If the Father were not then the chief author, the honour of this love of Christ would not redound to him ; it would not be *to the praise of the glory of his grace, Eph. 1. 6,* but to the praise of the glory of the grace of the Son. Herein is the love of the Father, that he was placable, desirous to be at peace, orders his Son to procure it upon such honourable

terms for himself, and secure in the issue for the creature, that he might communicate his goodness through a mediation to the polluted and rebellious world. The love of the Father in this dispensation is as great in moving it, as the love of Christ was in consenting. Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son, was a type of this. Christ's death was prefigured in Isaac, the Father's willingness represented in Abraham.

In this work, there is also a discovery of the highest wisdom. As goodness was the motive of this reconciliation, so wisdom was the director: the Father would not be principal in the greatest and highest notes of wisdom that ever sounded in the ears of men: the highest act of wisdom would originally flow from the Son, not from the Father. In this business he is known to be the only wise God: which attribute Paul celebrates with an emphasis. *Now unto the king eternal, &c. the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever*, after he had spoken of salvation by Christ, 1 Tim. 1. 17. No less than the wisdom of God could invent it; a punishment was due to lapsed man, that justice might not be defrauded: an infinite punishment the creature could not bear, the honour of God could not be fully vindicated in that way: man justly owed a satisfaction, but could not pay it; nor without that satisfaction could be acquitted by justice from the obligation to an eternal curse.

What, but infinite wisdom, could contrive a way for man's deliverance, whereby justice might have the highest right, and mercy the greatest applause; that the enmity between God and the creature might be totally demolished, never to break out again; the security of the creature established, never to be unravelled any more? The wisdom of God must then be the arbitrator in this great affair, to compose all seeming contradictions, and appoint means fully proportioned to the ends intended. His love would not leave the world to perish, nor his justice leave sin

without punishment; the one did not consist with his merciful goodness, nor the other with the honour of his law, and the immutability of his sentence.

There is a way therefore found in the treasures of his wisdom to procure peace to the sinner with honour to himself; to reconcile the sinner without impunity for the sin; to satisfy both the cries of his justice, and the yearnings of his compassion, the one in the punishment of sin in a surety, the other in pardoning sin in our persons. * “That God might be appeased, and that man might have wherewith to appease him, there is given to the human nature a new man, greater than a man, which might satisfy for man, and have that in himself which might exceed all the debt man owed to God.” This is such a manifold wisdom which must spring from the Father, and to whom the honour of it is due; as being *his eternal purpose, which he purposed in Jesus Christ our Lord, Eph. 3. 10, 11.* This being therefore the highest act of wisdom, must originally arise from the Father, the principal person in the Deity, the fountain of all decrees, and therefore of those wherein the choicest wisdom of the Deity sparkles. How could it be *the praise of the glory of his grace*, if he had not concerned himself in the whole undertaking? It is hereby that title of *the Father of glory* belongs to him, as he is the *God of our Lord Jesus Christ*, as Mediator: herein shines the glory of his paternity.

2. God the Father is the *principal author* of this reconciliation.

(1.) The particular *style God assumes* in the new testament manifests it. A title not known in the old testament, often in the new, *Eph. 1. 3, and 3. 14, 1 Pet. 1. 3.* In the old testament he was called the God of Israel; and immediately before the discovery of Christ in the flesh, Zacharias blesses him under that title. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath*

* Sabund. Tit. 2. 2.

visited and redeemed his people, Luke 1. 68. And God in a solemn manner intitles himself the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, Exod. 3. 15. This was to be his name for ever, and his memorial to all generations, because he was a God settling his covenant with them, and promising the Messiah out of their loins; therefore when he was to deliver the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage according to his promise to Abraham, he entitles himself thus, that their fathers might respect him in that promise; and among them he was chiefly known by this title, and that of their God that brought them out of the land of Egypt, and sometimes, The Lord which created heaven and earth.

But when the mystery of redemption, hid in God from ages and generations, was drawn out of his treasury, he appears upon the stage in another garb with a new title: * when the spiritual redemption, whereof all their other deliverances were as types, was wrought. He declares himself in a new style *as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, because the seed promised, upon which account he was called the God of Abraham, was now come, and the covenant of redemption was fully settled with him, and in him; and so he is called the God of Christ, † *Eph. 1. 17.*

1. Not in the regard of the divine nature, for so Christ is God *equal* with the Father, *Phil. 2. 6*; but in regard of his *human* nature, as he was a creature, and subject to God as a creature. 2. In regard of his mediatory office; in which respect he is his Father's ambassador, sent with a commission, acting according to instructions received from him; in this regard he often owns that he acted by his Father's authority, that his Father was greater than himself. 3. In regard of the covenant between them: in this respect chiefly

* Sanderson's Serm. part 2. p. 190. Zanch. in *Eph. 1. 3.* Bodius in *Eph. 1. 3.*

† Bodius in loc. p. 148. col. 1.

he is said to be the *God of our Lord Jesus Christ*, as he is said to be the God in a special manner to *Abraham*, as being in *covenant* with him, *Gen. 17. 7.*

Christ was in covenant with God several ways; under the legal covenant, having subjected himself to it, and covenanted to fulfil the conditions of it. In the covenant of redemption, wherein it was promised him to have a seed, and to be the Mediator and foundation of the covenant of grace, the confirmer of it by his death, and interpreter of it, and advocate for the fulfilling the terms of it; though he was not properly in that under the covenant of grace himself. And as he is thus the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ he is the *Father of mercies*, and *God of all comfort* to us. And as he stands in this relation, all *spiritual blessings* flow from him to us: he is therefore the principal person to be considered in the work of reconciliation, not only as the party to whom we are reconciled, but the party by whom the whole plot and model of our reconciliation was laid, which is effected by the Son, and applied by the Spirit.

2. All the spiritual blessings we have by Christ spring from *the Father*; surely then reconciliation and redemption, which are none of the meanest blessings, indeed the visible foundation of all the rest, arising immediately from election, the secret foundation, and which are indeed the end which electing love aimed at; these are the corner stone upon which all the rest are built. What communications could we have from a God implacable? a God not reconciled? Therefore to God the Father the apostle ascribes all: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, Eph. 1. 3.* If all, then this, none are excepted, pardon of sin, endowment with righteousness, adoption of sons, infusions of grace, participation of the divine nature, whatsoever blessings deserve the title of spiritual, own the Father as the first fountain: he adds, *in heavenly*

places as our translation, or *heavenly things* as others; both amount to the same, all the blessings which respect our heavenly state. The Father was the authoritative actor in all that Christ did; *The Father that dwells in me, he doeth the works*, John 14. 10: as the power of a prince resides in the ambassador, for the performance of those actions to which he is designed: whatsoever Christ purchased of the Father, he purchased by the will of the Father, that he might communicate himself to us with honour to all his glorious perfections.

The old testament also ascribes this to the principal person in the Deity, *I will save them by the Lord their God, or Jehovah their God*; or, as the Chaldee, *I will redeem them by the word of the Lord*, Hos. 1. 7. He is therefore frequently called the God of peace, because he is full of thoughts of peace, and is the fountain of our peace in Christ; as he is called the God of holiness, because there is nothing he thinks, nothing he does, nothing he speaks, but is holy, and is the fountain of all holiness to his creatures. All that which we have by Christ, is said to be *the mystery of his will purposed in himself, according to his good pleasure*, Eph. 1. 9. What was the object of this purpose? All those spiritual blessings the apostle had numbered up before, which he resolved himself to complete and communicate to us by Christ; as all the motions in the world depend upon the motion of the *primum mobile*, so all our blessings upon the motion of God's love.

In the communication of those blessings, the Father has a particular hand; it is not said only that Christ is *made to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, but made all those to us *of God*, 2 Cor. 1. 30. And the apostle distinguishes the Father from the Son by this character; the Father *of whom* are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom*, are all things, 1 Cor. 8. 6. The Father is the first cause, first mover, first contriver of all spiri-

tual mercies for us ; *of him are all things*. Christ, the only means appointed by the Father to work those things for us, and communicate them to us ; therefore it is said, *by him are all things*. Therefore the whole work of redemption is often in the old testament called God's salvation ; and in the new testament called the will of the Father, and Christ all along owns it ; *As my Father hath commanded me, so I do*. Even those blessings which follow upon the death of Christ, are the issues of the grace of God ; the riches of his grace is the first cause of forgiveness, the freeness of his grace, of our justification ; *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ*, Eph. 1. 7. Rom. 3. 24. Yet those are the meritorious fruits of Christ's death ; much more are the counsels, contrivances, and resolves about this, the acts of his free grace.

3. The order and foundation of election discovers it. God chose men in Christ, which election is there ascribed to the Father, this was an act of love in the Father, which in no wise falls under the merit of Christ ; some things Christ merited, as our reconciliation, justification, &c. Some things were purely the acts of God's love without any merit of Christ, as election, and the incarnation of Christ. Christ did not merit election, for he was the first fruit of it ; nor God's purpose of reconciliation, nor his own mission into the world ; election then being the proper act of the Father, all those means which were ordered for the accomplishing the ends of the election, are of the Father's appointment, for under election falls both the manner and order of that which is to be done : therefore Christ also who is the only means of our redemption ; and Christ himself tells us, that the love of the Father did precede his mission, John 3. 16. It therefore preceded his designation. And Peter expressly asserts it, *Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in these last times for you*, 1 Pet. 1. 19, 20, *For you*, relates not only

to the manifestation in the latter times, but to the fore-ordination of him before the foundation of the world.

Christ was first elected as Head and Mediator, and as the corner stone to bear up the whole building ; for the act of the Father's election in Christ, supposes him first chosen to this mediatory work, and to be the head of the elect part of the world. After this election of Christ, others were predestinated to be conformed to this image of his : *Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren, Rom. 8. 29 ; i. e.* to Christ as Mediator, and taking human nature : not to Christ barely considered as God, for as God, Christ is no where said to be the first-born among many brethren. This conformity being specially intended in election, Christ was in the intention of the Father, the first exemplar and copy of it. One foot of the compass of grace stood in Christ as the centre, while the other walked about the circumference, pointing out one here, and another there, to draw a line as it were between every one of those points and Christ.

The Father then being the prime cause of the election of some out of the mass of mankind, was the prime cause of the election of Christ, to bring them to the enjoyment of that to which they were elected. It is likely that God, in founding an everlasting kingdom, should consult about the members, before he did about the head. Christ was registered at the top of the book of election, and his members after him. Is it called therefore *the book of the Lamb* ; Christ was the title and chief subject matter of the book : he was first chosen, as the well-head of grace and glory, then others chosen on whom, from, and through him those should be conferred ; for he hath chosen us in him, that we should be holy ; therefore he chose Christ as the spring to convey this holiness to his elect. The elect were given by the Father to Christ, as Mediator. Christ therefore was set up as Media-

tor by the Father's pleasure; his office was settled by the Father before the gift was bestowed upon him.

(4.) The *creation of the world*, which is ascribed to the Father, was principally *intended by him for this end*, Colos. 1. 16. All things were created *by him and for him*: Christ was the means whereby God created all things, and the end for which they were created, that he might be the head of the elect kingdom which God intended to establish by him, and discover the perfections of God in an illustrious manner; and therefore God willed Christ then as the head of all his works. * It was from eternity decreed by God to create a world, to communicate himself to his creature, and to have a number of elect to praise him; therefore he resolved to create man, and endue him with such faculties, yet mutable; he knew what every thing would work, if it were created in this or that state and condition. He knew the devil would be envious of man's happiness, he knew what temptation would assault man, and the full strength of that temptation, to what degree it would arise, and that man would sink under this temptation, apostatize from him, ingulf himself and the whole human race in misery, and give him thereby an occasion to lay open his wisdom, goodness, mercy, and justice; for God sees all things distinctly in their true causes, and therefore cannot but know the event of them: upon this foreknowledge God appointed a remedy for man, wherein to manifest his transactions in a transcendent manner.

And indeed God willed the creation, and upon that the permission of sin, that he might take occasion from thence to communicate himself to man in the most excellent manner: for he that works wisely, does not only work from foreknowledge, but from a previous intention; so as when God would make Joseph

* Amiraunt de la Prædestin. chap. 6. p. 62, &c. Suarez, in 3 Parts. Aquin: Disp. 5. 5. 2. p. 139, 140.

a prince of Egypt, and use to that end the envy and ill will of his brothers, it is not to be thought that God only, after the foresight of their sin, did will to make Joseph a prince; but on the contrary, he would advance Joseph to a prince-like state, and therefore did permit his brothers' sin, to use their evil to a good end: we find all the providences of God concurring since the foundation of the world, to the bringing forth Christ the head of it; therefore the first will of God in the creation was the advancement of his Son, and founding an everlasting kingdom under him, because in all wise disposals of things, even by men, the execution of things answers the intention; and those things which are last in execution, are first in intention.

And the scripture clearly evidences this, for it speaks of *a promise of eternal life given to those that believe before the world began, Tit. 1. 1.* He does not say the *decree*, but the *promise*; this promise was then made by the Father to Christ, for the constituting this mediatory kingdom; he is therefore by this promise settled by the Father, as the head of the creation, and the author of reconciliation; for it is made to him as the head of the believing world, and as the feoffee in that for them, for it concerns eternal life. *To us*, says he, i. e. to those that believe; and this promise was nothing else but that word which is now manifested through preaching, ver. 3. The whole gospel is built upon this promise, and is nothing else but the manifestation and result of that negotiation between them before the beginning of the world: the gospel is nothing else but this piece of gold beaten into leaf; we cannot rightly understand the gospel till we understand this transaction, because the gospel is nothing else but the explication of this first promise of God to Christ.

Now these great acts of election and creation being the acts principally of the Father, and done for the glory of Christ, and the completing under him an

eternal kingdom; it will follow, that the Father was also principal in all the designs of Christ, and in what he did. All things are for the elect. The elect for Christ, Christ for God. The glory of God stands at the top as the chief end of all. *All are yours, you are Christ's, and Christ is God's*, 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23. They were all created for Christ as the immediate end, for God as the ultimate end, and therefore now ruled and governed by Christ, and at last the kingdom shall be delivered up to the Father, that God may be all in all, 1 Cor. 18. 24.

(5.) All the *thoughts* of God in *all ages* of the world were employed about this concern. Christ owns this in his acknowledgment to God: *Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts to us ward, they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee: If I would declare, and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered.* Some observe that this psalm hath wholly a respect to Christ, by reason of the different placing the words of the title; the name of David in the Hebrew being put before the word psalm, לְדָוִד מְזִמּוֹר, and rather to be rendered to the chief musician concerning David a Psalm, i. e. the antitype of David, Christ being called David. *Hos.* 3. 5. *Jer.* 30. 9. He that speaks of the innumerable thoughts or consultations of God about this, is the same person that speaks, ver. 6, 7, 8, which words are applied to Christ, *Heb.* 10. 5, 6, 7; and those verses seem to tell us what those counsels of God which appear so admirable were, viz. about a redemption by Christ: to this result did they all come, that *sacrifice thou wouldest not, but a body thou hast prepared me.*

The infinite numberless thoughts of God centre in this one thing of making Christ the foundation of the reconciliation intended, and exalting him thereupon. All the thoughts of God discovered to us in the scripture refer to this: the spirit of prophecy seems to be given chiefly for the publication of this: this God

spake by the mouth of all his holy prophets ever since the world began; concerning the sufferings of Christ: *Those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath fulfilled, Acts 3. 18.* Concerning also his exaltation, and the completing of his kingdom, it was spoken *by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world begun, ver. 21.* This thing run so in the mind of God, that he would have all the mouths of all his prophets filled with it, and when prophecy began first to breathe in the world, it was to declare this grace of God: not a signal prophecy revealed since the foundation of the world, but there was something of Christ in it. *The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy, Rev. 19. 10:* the prophetic spirit, which was from the beginning of the world, was a witness of Christ, what God had appointed him to do; not one prophet is excepted.

And therefore the Spirit is sometimes more large in those stories or passages which were types or declarations of Christ, than in other things; as in Abel's death by Cain, when nothing is spoken of the death of the other children of Adam. How lively and largely is the story of Joseph, a type of Christ in his sufferings and advancement, represented; David's flights, and his ascent to the crown; Solomon's temple, the particular description and punctual delineation of the Jewish ceremonies, all relating to this. The story of Jonah, upon record, when many other prophecies were lost, chiefly as a type of his death in the belly of the whale, and of his resurrection in being cast out upon dry land, after three days lying in the pit.

The law and the prophets appear two distinct things at the first sight; as Moses and Elias at Christ's transfiguration appeared distinct from Christ; but when the cloud was removed, none but Christ was seen. So law and prophets centre in him, and his reconciling expiatory death; they, as it were, disappear, and Christ ap-

pears to be the full sum and scope of them, when we lay our eyes nearer to the divine mystery. His whole undertaking was inclosed in the types, and represented by the prophets. God hath discovered that all his counsels and thoughts from the beginning of the world were about this; and whenever he sent any prophetic message, it was a witness of Christ, or had some relation to him. This may give us an *item* how we should read the prophets, with an eye to Christ, that our thoughts in reading may agree with God's thoughts in declaring.

So that I think from these put together it appears, that the Father is the principal author of our redemption; that the original of God's favour to lapsed man, must spring from his own natural grace and goodness; that the death of Christ did not first dispose God to have mercy on us. The Father's love preceded the gift, and therefore preceded his resolution concerning the gift. The scripture makes Christ's death every where the effect of God's love; what is the effect is not the moving cause; his first workings of mercy to us, were not raised up by the death of the Redeemer.

PART III.

HOW THE AGENCY OF GOD IS DISPLAYED.

In the appointment of Jesus—He was appointed to be the medium of reconciliation—Appointed to every office—The Father's delight in his qualifications for his work—He glories in the plan of reconciliation—He solemnly called Christ to his work—Called him to it as an honour—Counselled him—Gave him a particular command—The great wisdom and love of God in reconciliation—Encouragement to plead with him.

OUR Third inquiry is, wherein the agency of the Father in this affair appears. God was in Christ reconciling the world.

1. As choosing and appointing Christ. In which respect he is called the elect of God, the servant whom he hath chosen, said to be appointed by him, *Heb. 3. 2.* He was fore-ordained in the decree, designed in the promise, prefigured in the types, predicted by the prophets. Our Redeemer came forth of the womb of a decree from eternity, before he came out of the womb of the virgin in time: he was hid in the will of God, before he was made manifest in the flesh of a Redeemer: he was a lamb slain in decree, before he was slain upon the cross: he was possessed by God *in the beginning, or the beginning*

of his way, *Prov.* 8. 22, 23, 31; the head of his works, and set up from everlasting to have his delights among the sons of men.

The Father's appointment of Christ, is not to be understood of an appointment to his sonship, for so he was from eternity begotten; but to his Mediatorship. As he was from eternity the Son of God by generation, so he was from eternity the Mediator between God and man by constitution: the one is natural, the other arbitrary: as he was the Son, he was only God; as Mediator, God and man. His being a Son, is in order of nature before his being a Mediator; his being a Son, is from God's nature; his being a Mediator, is from God's will. Believers are said to be begotten sons according to his will, but Christ is a begotten Son according to his nature, and Mediator according to his will: Christ is a name of charge and office, not of nature. He had been a Son, had he never been a Mediator, or stepped in for the rescue of the world.

All therefore that Christ did, is comprehended in one word, doing the will of God. *I come to do thy will, O God, Heb.* 10. 7; there was an antecedent act of will in God, before there was a subsequent act of will in Christ in order of nature. It is called therefore the wisdom of God, in regard of contrivance; his purpose, in regard of the immutability and peremptoriness of his will; the pleasure of the Lord, in regard of the delight he took both in the contrivance and resolution; both in the act of his head and heart, *Eph.* 3. 10, *Eph.* 1. 9, *Isa.* 53. 10.

(1.) He was appointed by the Father to this end, viz. of redemption. God set him up as a screen between the injured deity, and the offending creature. It is the scope of the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, to manifest that Christ was designed to be an high-priest, to offer sacrifice for men. He was designed to be a sacrifice, because all other were

insufficient; and he submits to be a sacrifice, for to that purpose he had a body to do the will of God in. *Psal.* 40. 6, 7. This was God's aim in his first choice: he was to be the foundation of the covenant for his people, to bring the prisoners from prison, and those that sit in darkness out of the prison house; he intended him as a propitiation for sin; *whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation*, προῖθετο, *purposed*, (the same word is translated, *Eph.* 1. 9, *purposed*) *To declare, I say, his righteousness at this time that he may be just, and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus*, ver. 25. 26. Ἰλαστήριον alluding to the propitiatory under the law, a type of Christ: he purposed him in his eternal decree to this end, he shadowed him in the mercy seat under the law, and afterwards exposed him to public view, to declare his righteousness in the remission of sin. And because it seems incredible, which a wounded conscience especially will hardly believe, the apostle repeats it again.

One would think that justice should lay aside its demands against the sinner, rather than feed on so rich a sacrifice. But God did, notwithstanding his near relation to him, single him out in his eternal council from angels and men, intended him in the ἰλαστήριον, and all the types of the law, and brought him upon the stage in time to declare his justice, to be as ready to be appeased, and save upon that account, as before it was to damn. He is therefore called the *Lamb of God*, *Job* 1. 29; (in allusion to the lambs separated for the daily sacrifice) to be offered up to God, for the taking away the sins of the world. It was with respect to the will of God in this first appointment that he delivered up himself; *He gave himself for our sins according to the will of God*, whereby is meant the Father in the deity. In the very ordaining him the Father respected our glory; *Hidden wisdom which was ordained for our glory*, *1 Cor.* 2. 7. This hidden wisdom is Christ crucified,

as appears in the next verse. Christ as reconciling by his suffering, is the wisdom of God hidden with him, not known to the world for many ages.

Had God had a mind to remain an enemy, he had dealt with mankind after that covenant of works which they had transgressed, and never had deputed a Mediator to stand between himself and them, to administer things according to the tenor of another covenant. It was highly represented, when *Moses sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice* upon the people, calling it *the blood of the covenant*, *Exod. 24. 8*; at the end of this action, Moses and Aaron, with his sons and the seventy elders, saw the God of Israel in a human shape; *There was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire, and as it were the body of heaven in its clearness*, ver. 10. The sapphire, some tell us, was an emblem of the kingly and priestly office; such a representation there was when he appeared as a man to Ezekiel. Immediately after this typical representation of him in the sprinkling the blood of the covenant, he appeared to them in a human form, as the great intended antitype of that type they had been immediately before celebrating. As the Spirit is appointed to a peculiar office to sanctify, and therefore is called a spirit of holiness; and the end of his mission is to sanctify: so the appointment of Christ was to an office of high priest and reconciler, and therefore whatsoever he did and suffered belonged to that office by peculiar designation. He was appointed to be a *witness to the people*, a witness of the transcendent love of God, to bring men to God, that the *nations which knew him not* might run unto him, *Isa. 55. 4, 5*.

(2.) God appointed him to *every office* in order to this redemption, to every degree and circumstance. As a priest to appease his wrath, a prophet to declare his mercy, a king to bring men to the terms of reconciliation. He was appointed a priest for ever, that we might *draw nigh to God*, God designed him as a

prophet, from whom we might receive *his lively oracles*; God set him up as a king, that those might be *blessed that put their trust in him*, *Heb.* 7. 17, 19; *Acts* 7. 37, 38; *Psal.* 2. 6, 12. The very circumstances were appointed by God; that he should be born of a virgin; the place where, Bethlehem; of the Jewish race, of the royal line of David, and that when it was decayed and sunk to poverty and misery; *a rod out of the stem of Jesse, a root out of a dry ground*, and the Jews never questioned the royalty of Christ's extraction.

The time of his coming was fixed in Jacob's prophecy about the time of the fall of the Jewish government, *Gen.* 49. 10: before the ruin of the second temple, *Mat.* 3. 1. After seventy weeks of years, from the time of Daniel's prophecy. What was figured in God's opening Adam's side to form a spouse; in the death of righteous Abel by the hands of his brother Cain; in Isaac, under the edge of the knife upon mount Moriah, and raised to be a blessing to the world; in Joseph, in the pit and prison, and afterwards on the throne, to deliver the Church from famine; in the paschal lamb, killed to save the sprinkled houses with its blood from the destroying angel, were really fulfilled in him, all the circumstances were appointed with a particular designation of the end of them.

The manner of his death was foretold by David, they have *pierced my hauds, and my feet*, *Psal.* 22. 16. The manner of his crucifixion, his burial, resurrection and prosperity afterwards, the blessing of men by him, justification by the knowledge of him, were decyphered by Isaiah above seven hundred years before his coming, so exactly, as if that prophecy had rather been a gospel writ after his death, since the events answered so punctually to each prediction. He was promised as a prince of peace, *Isa.* 9. 6; one that should make no noise, appear with no pomp and grandeur, *Zech.* 9. 10. send forth the prisoners out of the pit, ver. 11. Be the peace himself, *Mic.* 5. 5; as a king

destroy the empire of the devil, pour the waters of grace upon the world, *Ezek.* 36; take away iniquity, make reconciliation for sin, bring in everlasting righteousness, *Dan.* 9. 24.

(3.) It was a *settled, firm, and irreversible* constitution. It was not only a council, wherein wisdom pitched upon it as absolutely the best means for the creation's standing; but determinate, wherein it was unalterable; *delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, Acts* 3. 23. Counsel and foreknowledge are joined, to show that there was the highest reason and most resolute will; not a casual thing or contingency, but an immutable decree for his reconciling death, fixed after the wisest counsel. And therefore in this appointment to this office, God took an oath, and thereby constituted Christ an irrevocable *Priest, after the order of Melchisedec, Heb.* 7. 21, to bless his people with * peace, which oath must refer to the first appointment of Christ to this office, in order to the making him a surety of a *better testament*, ver. 22. Better for the preservation of the honour of God, and happiness of man. It was such a constitution that admitted not of the least alteration or repentance in God; an oath which was not taken for the creation of the world, or the settling the Aaronical priesthood; by this oath he declares this constitution to be irreversible. In this regard he is said to be sealed by God, to show the perpetuity of this constitution, as the seal to the book, *Rev.* 5. 1, shows the irreversible certainty of God's decrees.

And therefore his appearance before his incarnation in his glory, as well as after his ascension, was with a *rainbow* encircling him: a sign of an everlasting covenant that God would no more bring a *destroying deluge* upon the world, *Ezek.* 1. 28: *Rev.* 4. 3; *Gen.*

* *Hos.* 6. 3. his going forth is prepared as the morning 111
firm, stable, unalterable as the covenant of the day, like the sun-rising
at such a point notwithstanding all the darkness.

9. 16. The apostle seems to intimate as though this decree and constitution was the standard of all God's other actions; the point in which they should all centre, or the rule which they should be squared by; for as all oursins met on Christ, so all God's counsels met in him, *Eph.* 1. 9; the rule must be perpetual, since all God's works were to be regulated by this counsel. Speaking of this mystery of his will, which he had purposed in himself, to gather in one all things in Christ, he repeats again, ver. 11, this purpose of him, *who works all things according to the counsel of his own will.* All things took birth from this counsel, and were for the perfecting this will.

(4.) God chose him to this work with an *high delight*, as one fully *fit for the work*, in whom he could confide. He put *no trust in his saints*, for they were in their own nature defectible; where a man cannot trust his concerns, he can have no pleasure. The Son of God's undertaking to be the head of the elect, and satisfy for them, was that the Father could only place his confidence in; this was that which could only be acceptable to him. He calls him his elect, בְּחִירִי *Behold my servant whom I uphold, my elect in whom my soul delights, Isa.* 42. 1. My tried elect; the word signifies one chosen after serious consideration and trial. God found none so fit among all the legions of angels, none that could so compleatly answer his design for reconciliation; but upon a full examination of the whole affair he found him exactly fit for it, and therefore brings him in with a behold, a note of *admiration*, as one he could *rest in*; for so the word נִחַם signifies, as well as to uphold.

Upon this trial, and upon this confidence, his soul, as it follows, *delighted in him.* He knew he would be faithful, and able to perfect it; some therefore refer, *Heb.* 1. 9, *Thou hast loved righteousness &c. therefore God hath anointed thee, &c.* to the first constitution of Christ; God rested upon the holiness of his nature; and that *From the bowels of my mother hath he made*

mention of my name, *Isa. 49. 1*, expresses, in the judgment of some, the great joy of God in this Mediator, he had my name as I was constituted Mediator continually in his mouth. It was his pleasure to be always thinking and speaking of it; or it may note the familiar converse between the Father and the Son, concerning this work of redemption; we speak and think much of that wherein we have the greatest pleasure. And those words, *I was daily his delight, rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, Prov. 8. 30, 31*; intimate that the Son was the daily delight of the Father, as he had placed his mediatory delights among the sons of men: as the Father saw all things exactly settled and governed by the Son, according to his mind and council.

And therefore when this suretyship of Christ is mentioned, God is pleased to express himself with a pleasing admiration; *Their governor shall proceed out of the midst of them, and I will cause him to draw near and he shall approach unto me: for who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord! Jer. 50. 21.* Showing the delight of his soul in his own choice, and his Son's acceptance, in the greatness of his person, and the heartiness of his undertaking. The word ערב signifies to pawn or be a surety. We many times express our joy in a mode of admiration; so is God pleased to descend to our capacities in expressing his, what is the ground of it, ver. 22, the everlastingness of the covenant; *and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.* How may we approach to God with the pleas of Christ in our mouths, since the Father had so mighty a delight in him!

(5.) The Father had a *particular love to Christ* in this appointment, and highly loved him for his acceptance of it. If he loved his Son's consent to it, he loved his own proposal of it; *Thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world, John 17. 24*; which according to the best interpreters, respects Christ's person as Mediator, rather than his naked

Deity. The Father loved Christ as Mediator in the first designment, that in him he might love his elect. Our Saviour prays as Mediator; the love therefore which he uses as an argument, was the love of the Father to him as Mediator. The Father's love to him as the second person in the Trinity, had not been an argument congruous for that petition of his people's seeing his glory; for the love of the Father to him in that regard, did not necessarily infer a love to any creature; but his love to him as Mediator and Head, infers his love to all his members, and was a suitable argument wherewith to press him for a glorifying his whole body. Certainly if God loved Christ because he did *lay down his life for his sheep*, *John 10. 17*, there must be an high degree of love to him, because he answered the Father's appointment of him from eternity, by a voluntary consent; as the act of suffering, so the first undertaking draws out the Father's love: the Father loved him before, as his Son; he now loves him as the universal head; the Father's loving him for complying with this appointment, manifests the height of his love to all his members, for whose sake, next to his own glory, he constituted him in his mediatory office.

- Some think that the well-pleasedness of the Father with Christ for this work, was one part of the glory of Christ: no doubt it was after his performance of it, and is his glory now in heaven: if so I would thus understand, *Glorify me with thy ownself, with that glory which I had with thee before the world was: John 17. 5*, i. e. Testify thyself well pleased with my mediation which was the glory I had with thee as Mediator before the world was: the glory of his deity was not impaired, that was not therefore the glory he prays for, it is a glorifying him with his ownself; what is it then but the high affection the Father bore to him; for what glory can we conceive to come from the Father to the Son as Mediator before the world was, but this? The argument he uses evidences it.

I have manifested thy name, ver. 6 ; i. e. I have actually done that, in the undertaking whereof, O Father, thou wert so highly pleased. And, *I have glorified thee on the earth, and finished the work thou gavest me to do*, ver. 4. I have glorified thee by witnessing that thou art a God placable, full of love, reconciling the world ; *therefore glorify me*. As the glory Christ brought to God relates to the business of redemption, so the glory he requests of God which he had before, more likely relates, not to the glory of his Deity, but his glory as Mediator, which is God's mighty pleasure with it, acceptation of his willingness to perform it, and great affection he bore to him thereupon.

The glory of his Deity was not a subject to be prayed for : the glory which he was by covenant to have after his death and resurrection in his human nature, was a glory in decree, and by compact, but not actually possessed before his ascension. But the acceptation of him, and high pleasure in him, as undertaking to be our surety, was a glory he really had with the Father before the world was : Nor does this sense weaken the proof from hence of the *deity of Christ* ; for if he were in being before the world was, he was no creature. How comfortably may we take up the same argument in our mouths as Christ did here, since the love he bore to Christ as Mediator before the world was, did redound to every member of his sons which was to be in time !

(6.) God *glories* in this contrivance and appointment. With what daring expressions to all creatures does God challenge the honour of founding this covenant of love and peace wholly to himself ? No creature did so much as put in his opinion in this counsel, or contribute any thing to it, but he would go away with the whole glory himself ; *Tell ye, and bring them near, yea, let them take counsel together : who hath declared this from ancient time ? who hath told it from that time ? have not I the Lord ? and there is no God*

besides me, a just God and a Saviour Isa. 45. 21. There is no contriver, no declarer of this but myself. It is not meant of the deliverance from Babylon, as some interpret it, which is evinced by the following verses, to the end of the chapter : as also, where it is called an *everlasting salvation*, which shall admit of *no shame and confusion, world without end*, ver. 17 ; a salvation that shall last as long as eternity endures. Well might all the attributes of God glory.

How surprising is his love, that the Holy of holies should so love sinners ; the sovereign Monarch justly jealous of his glory, furious rebels, and unprofitable slaves, as to appoint his Son for the Reconciler and Saviour : what motives could there be but misery to draw out the compassions of this love ? What attractions in ungrateful creatures lying in their blood ? What arguments could be in our thoughts to plead with God for so admirable a design ? Justice and mercy are comprehended as the great things he glories in : *just God and a Saviour*. Wisdom might glory in the contrivance, and goodness in the appointment of one so strong to be a sacrifice for propitiation : to be himself a just Judge, and yet a tender Saviour ; for the Father is called *Saviour* as well as the Son ; *the kindness of God our Saviour*, distinguished from Christ our Saviour ; he finds a way to have a valuable satisfaction of his justice, wherein should be bound up an eternal security to the sinner ; a great priest for our guilt, and a beautiful pattern for our imitation ; justice should triumph in the punishment, mercy in the redemption, the creature in the fruits redounding from both.

How much was his sovereignty glorified in it, which he seems also to aim at ; *I am a God, and there is none beside me*. His sovereignty was manifest over all the creation : men and angels were his absolute vassals ; there was nothing wanting to declare the highest pitch of it, when his own Son became a servant ; the Lord of all things became lower than an-

gels, and as low as the meanest man ; who shall stand out against his pleasure, since the Son, equal with him, stood not out against his Father's will ? God does this of himself, of his own grace ; by himself, his own wisdom ; for himself, his own glory.

2. God the Father *solemnly called him* ; *Say you of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest, because I have said I am the Son of God ?* John 10. 36. Our Saviour mentions a double act of the Father towards him, separation and mission, a dedication of Christ to his mediatorship, and then his actual mission. This call is expressed, *The Lord hath called me from the womb*, Isa. 49. 1 ; which doth not imply, says Calvin, that he was *but then* called, when he came out of the womb of the virgin, or that the prophet defines the beginning of time ; but it is as much as if he had said, before I came out of the womb, God called me, and separated me to this office : as Paul speaks of his *separation from the womb*, yet he was chosen before the foundation of the world ; and Jeremiah was known before he was formed in the belly, and sanctified and ordained a prophet before he came out of the womb, Jer. 1. 5. So that in this place the prophet introduces Christ, speaking of his call to this office, after it was formed in the eternal counsel of God.

In regard of this call by God, and his acceptance of it, the *same yesterday* that he was *to day*, and will be *for ever*. His call to the mediatorship was of an higher date than the types of the law. *Before Abraham was, he was*, John 8. 58, in the call to, and actual exercise of his mediatory function ; it was an argument to prove his former assertion, that Abraham *saw his day*, and *rejoiced* in the sight of it ; which would be of no strength, if he were not then known as Mediator, by whom God was to be reconciled to man. It is *I am*, to show the constant relation he had to this office ; *Before Abraham was I am* ; Mediator ; affirming himself here to be the Messiah according to

the Jews' usual speech, that the law and Messiah were before the creation of the world. The words used to express the call of Christ are of a greater signification than the word used for the call of Aaron, *Heb. 5. 4*, καλεμενος, as if you should, in an ordinary way call a man to you, or call him by his name: but ver. 10, speaking of the call of Christ, it is a word of a more weighty signification, προσαγορευθεις, solemnly called and pronounced an High Priest.

1. God called him to it as an *honour*, *Heb. 5. 4*. *No man takes this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest, but he that said unto him, thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee.* Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest, but he, i. e. the Father, glorified him, and bestowed an honour upon him when he called him. The Father thought it an honour at the time of the call, not that there could be any addition of honour to the person of Christ as God, or as though he had been defective in honour, in being the Son of God, and not Mediator: but as the mediatory or priestly office is an excellent office, and honourable employment. Supposing the incarnation of Christ designed the mediatory office was the highest honour that could be conferred upon him; what greater glory can there be, than to be placed in such a sphere, wherein he may honour the Creator more than all besides? Can there be a greater honour, next to being the Son of God, than to compensate the injuries God hath suffered, and repair the ruins under which the creature had fallen; to restore God's honour to him without blemish, yea, with a greater brightness; like a bloody sun in the evening, rising fairer and fresher the next day: and happiness to man without a flaw; to give God ground to look upon his works with pleasure, and man a foundation to look upon God with delight? the honour appears to consist in being *the author of eternal salvation*, as it follows, ver. 9; though this honour

was to cost him dear, yet he was recompensed in the ends of it, the high satisfaction of God and reparation of the creatures. In which sense *his reward* is said to *be with him*, as well as *his work before him*; how is his work his reward? *He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, and gather the lambs with his arm; he shall restore God's chosen ones into his fold, Isa. 40. 10. 11.*

What greater glory than to be a reconciling Mediator, through whose hands all the communications between God and man were to pass? * Nay the very calling him to death, and proposing it to him for such high ends, seems to be a greater honour than his innocence barely considered, or his exaltation afterwards; *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that he by the grace of God might taste death for every man, Heb. 2. 9.* † It would be worth consideration, whether this glory and honour be not meant of the honour of his office, as his being lower than the angels is meant of his state of humiliation in the world; and understanding it so, the words lie very fair before us. If it were understood of his glory after his sufferings, why should it be added immediately after, *that he should taste death for every man*? That was not the end of his exaltation after his death, but his exaltation was the reward of that. But the sense runs strikingly thus. *But we see Jesus* who in his state in the world was *lower than angels*, yet in regard of his office and design had a crown of honour and glory above them all, in that by the grace of God he was set apart to taste death for every man; and by the pursuit of the apostle's discourses, speaking of his perfection by suffering for the destruction of the devil, who had brought death upon mankind, and the making reconciliation for the

* Octino, part 5. Pred. 13. page 99.

† In the 8th psalm, whence this is cited, the psalmist considers man in the honour of his creation; and the apostle applies it to Christ in the honour of his constitution.

sins of the people, the office itself in which he was placed for those great ends may be well said to be a crown of honour and glory.

It was an honourable office in a state of humiliation, as David's line was an honourable line in a state of poverty. It was in his death he discovered his virtues, victories, and triumph. In his death he blazoned out all the perfections of his Father; he illustrated his mercy, and showed how dear the souls of men were to him. He displayed his holiness, and manifested how odious the sins of men were to him. What would Christ have been (supposing the union of the second person to the humanity) if he had not died? He had not been made perfect, as the apostle intimates (*to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering*) without suffering. He was called by God to suffering, that he might be perfect as Mediator, that the justice of God might as it were quench its thirst in his blood, and the mercy of God rise out of that sea of blood, like a rich morning sun: and perfect also as a pattern, for in that his humility, charity, patience appeared in the highest manner to the sons of men for their imitation. God called him to it as an honour, and placed the very honour of it in the very suffering that death, as well as in acting afterwards upon that foundation as high priest for reconciling man.

It is inconsistent with the immense goodness of God, to bind his creature to any thing but what is highly conducing to the honour and happiness of his creature. Much less does it consist with the goodness of God, and that infinite affection he bore to his Son, to call him to that which was not an honour in itself. But this honour of high priest God calls him to, is an honour next to that of his sonship, which those words intimate, but thou hast said to him, *thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee, Heb. 5. 5*; as if it were a new begetting him. If it be then an honour in the account of God for Christ to die for

such worthy ends, it is not less an honour to him to exercise that office which is so honourable in itself, which is an high ground of faith and confidence in him, in all our approaches to him, wherein we engage him in glorious acts and worthy of him.

2. God *counselled* him upon this call to undertake it with *large proffers*. *I will bless the Lord who hath given me counsel, Psal. 16. 7.* It was the same person that blesses God for this counsel, who saith that he had *set the Lord always before him*, ver. 8, which words are expressly said by Peter to be spoken by David concerning him, i. e. Christ, *Acts 2. 25*; *I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand*; and so cites it to the end of the psalm. Christ blesses God for this counsel, and set this counsel of God always before him, which I have spoken of in reference to Christ's blessing God for it, before upon another occasion. I now cite it to evidence that there was a counsel of God to Christ about this affair. What was that he was counselled unto? To his sufferings: which are intimated in the following verse; upon the assurance that *his flesh should rest in hope, and that his soul should not be left in hell*, or the grave, the state of the dead, and the assurance of the fulness of joy and pleasure which he should have upon the account of this mediation for evermore.

If the Father were the first mover, that motion was not without an advice to Christ to concern himself as Mediator, and declaring how agreeable it would be to him; upon which account, what Christ did and suffered, was not only out of a bare obedience, but an affectionate obedience; *That the world may know that I love the Father, John 14. 31.* Therefore it is said, *God's law was within his heart, Psal. 40. 8.* It proceeded out of a tenderness of affection to satisfy his Father, who was desirous of reconciling man to him. For in Christ's undertaking, it could not be love to the Father, unless the effect of it, which was the

reconciliation of man, had been declared by his Father to be a thing highly pleasing to him; which declaration was as counselling Christ to this work. The Father counsels the creation of man; *Let us make man*, Gen. 1. 26; no less was the counsel about redemption the Father's counsel, let us so make man. The Father counselled him to be the head of the whole creation, whereby he might rest in it with a full complacency; the Son clasped about the Father with love and joy; the Father enfolds Christ in the glorious bosom of his counsel; the Son embraces the Father with the arms of an affectionate compliance; a mighty harmony! The one in proposing, the other in complying, that the glory of God, and the felicity of the creature, might be completed in an eternal union.

The truth is, the manner of the eternal decrees and counsels of God, are to us finite creatures, incomprehensible; but the scripture lowers itself in expressions suitable to our conceptions. As God is, in his word, represented to us with eyes and ears, and human members, in a way of condescension to our capacities; upon the same account are the transactions of God, by such ways of expression, brought down to our apprehensions. Add to this, *the counsel of peace* shall be *between them both*, Zech. 6. 12, 13. Some make this counsel of peace to be between the two offices, the royal and priestly, both in conjunction, and not interfering one with another, as sometimes they did in the Jewish state. Others, between the two persons, the Lord and the *man*, that is called the *branch*. The will of the Father and the Son, as they are one essence, is one; as they are two persons, there is counsel of both. Counsels seem to belong rather to persons than offices.

3. God gives Christ a *particular command* concerning our reconciliation and redemption. God purposing the redemption of man, the uniting his elect under one head, designing the person, proposing to

him the affair, to be managed in a body ; our Mediator, accepting of this constitution, receives a command to die ; *this commandment have I received of my Father, John, 10. 18, i. e. to lay down his life.* Sometimes it is called the will of his Father. The will of God is called a law, *Psa. 40,* and the sufferings of Christ are called *obedience ; He became obedient unto the death of the Cross, Phil. 2. 8.* He was obedient in all things, things antecedent to the cross, and to the last point. It could not be obedience to the law as a creature, because he never transgressed it ; and being innocent, and under the covenant of works, he had not disobeyed, if he had not suffered, because according to that covenant of works, he was not bound to suffer : for being without sin, he might have pleaded his right ; besides God would never command any thing against his own covenant*. It must therefore be obedience to some other precept, concerning his mediatory sufferings. *As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous, Rom. 5. 19.*

The obedience of Christ is opposed to the disobedience of Adam ; therefore as the disobedience of Adam was a proper disobedience, opposite to a plain precept ; so the obedience of Christ was a proper obedience, conformable to some precept. A congruous reason may be rendered for this command, because as men were destroyed by disobedience, so they should be repaired by obedience ; and because a work done in obedience is more perfect in itself, and acceptable to God ; for his authority and sovereignty, the righteousness, holiness, and equity of his law, is solemnly owned thereby. Some question, whether the command laid upon Christ, as Mediator, was a particular precept, or only a revealing of his incarnation and death, as a necessary means for the redemption of man, because he had decreed to accept no other satisfaction. Some think this latter, and that upon

* Suarez, vol. 13. in 3. part. Aquin. Disput. 43. § 3.

God's revealing his mind, there immediately arose in Christ an obligation to undertake this. It is more likely, that this affair is expressed to us under the notion of a call, counsel, command, to shew the ardency of the Father's affection for man's recovery, in an honourable way to himself; because the scripture places redemption in the Father's love and grace, as the fountain; and in Christ's love to his Father as well as to us, as hath been before noted.

There was the declaration of the will of the Father, which was the rule of Christ's acting, as the will of God is the rule of the Spirit's intercession in us; *According to God, Rom. 8. 27*, or as our translators have it, *according to the will of God*. A rule seems to be set for the Spirit's acting when he was sent, and a rule set for Christ's acting, when he was called; the Spirit had a rule set, for he was to glorify Christ, and act upon that foundation. This does not weaken the voluntariness of Christ in his undertaking, who was ready to comply with the call, *and made himself of no reputation, when he became obedient to the death of the cross*. When this command was given, is not so clear; but as the promise was made before the world began, *Tit. 1. 2*, so might the precept be given before the world began to Christ, considered as Mediator, for precepts many times accompany promises; the divine nature, which undertook the mediatory office, was not in itself capable of a command or a promise.

Use of these two heads.

First. How *adorable* then is the *depth of God's wisdom*, and the *vehemence of his kindness*, to have a remedy ready to apply for the cure of fallen nature? God had a salve lying by him for the sore, and provided himself with a remedy for defeating the designs of Satan. * When he came to make a process against Adam for his disobedience, and pronounce that death which he had merited, he like a merciful Father declared this appointment of one that should suffer in-

* Pont. Medit. part. 2. Medit. 5. pag. 207.

dignities from Satan, and deliver man from the death he had deserved, When he came to expel Adam out of his forfeited Paradise; he assures him of one that should open the gates of the heavenly Paradise to him. He appoints his recovery, as well as charges him with his crime; and though he barred the garden against him by a flaming sword, he promises to re-admit him by the *seed of the woman*, in whose blood that sword should lose both its edge and flame; its cutting and scorching quality. * Oh the miracles of divine love! the law saw us guilty, insolently taking up arms against him, plunging ourselves into those crimes he had prohibited, loathing those virtues he had commanded, guilty of millions of sins, meriting millions of deaths, and the wrath of God, the quintessence of hell. Yet how did his love work within him, and never ceased till he had found a way infinitely satisfactory to himself, and infallibly safe for his creature, whereby his injured attributes are righted, and our offending souls rendered capable of the happiness they had made themselves unworthy of!

He did this, and did it himself, by a decree incapable of any alteration, standing like a firm pillar to support man's happiness; the everlasting fountain of his love and joy were opened at the very thoughts of this admirable design. He clasped about the Mediator with the dearest affections never to be withdrawn. counselled, commanded, would not grow cool and faint in the concern. He drew out of the depths of his infinite wisdom, such a model which makes angels gaze, and believing sinners fall down to the dust in an humble admiration. He has appointed the heir of all things to be a servant for rebels: the Lord of glory, to be a man of sorrows; to pay his life, more worth than the lives of all the angels, as a ransom for us; appointed him to shed his blood, to preserve ours, and singled him out to feel the sword of his wrath in his own heart, that we might feel the effusions of his heal-

* Daille, Serm. sur. 3. Jean. 18. ser. 8. pag. 337, somewhat changed.

ing balm in ours. Oh wonderful goodness! to appoint and call out purity to suffer for impurity, and the innocent for the criminal.

2. Raise *pleas in prayer* from these considerations. You address yourselves to the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, representing to him his eternal design, the mark of his love, the centre of his delight. Desire of him *that Jesus* with all his glories, with all his graces: argue with him, whether he has not as much joy to see the fruits of his Son's death, to confer them upon his lost and sensible creatures, as to call him out for so great a purpose. Spread before him his eternal counsels, open the book of his resolves about Christ, read every syllable before him: let your soaring admirations, and your ardent petitions, keep pace together. How infinitely will the Father be pleased with such arguments, drawn from his own eternal thoughts of redemption. If he appointed a Mediator for you when you were rebellious, he will not deny that Mediator to you, when you are earnest and humble suppliants. His delight will be as much to bestow him upon them that seek him, as it was to consecrate him for men, when he knew they would spurn against him. He has the same thoughts of reconciling mercy, and nothing that he has done in order to this, does he yet repent of; he hath *sworn* when he called his Son, and *will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedeck*: make use therefore of him as supports of faith, and arguments in prayer.

PART IV.

THE COVENANT OF RECONCILIATION.

Covenant defined—A covenant with Adam, and with Christ—Fidelity of Christ—His prayer—Distinct evidence of a covenant—The notion of it suited to our conceptions—Difference between the covenants of redemption and grace—Distinct parties—The conditions—The time—Mediation of Jesus—He performed his part in the covenant of redemption—Claims his reward upon his own account—The Father's agreement with him.

THE Father enters into *terms of agreement* with his Son, about the work and methods of redemption; which is expressed by divines by the term of a *covenant*. This is the third consideration.

A covenant is an agreement of two or more persons, in some common end pleasing to them both, upon certain articles and conditions voluntarily consented to by both, and to be performed by each party with solemn obligations. So that in it there are two persons, mutual proposals and conditions, mutual consent, terminating in one and the same end. Now this covenant between the Father and the Son, was a transaction between them, concerning man's recovery, consisting of articles to be performed by both parties; something to be performed by Christ to the Father,

something to be performed by the Father to Christ. Something the Father required of him, something the Father promised to him. Some* make this covenant to be rather God's purpose and decree, concerning Christ's incarnation, and passion, and success of his suffering, and the issue thereupon, and therefore improperly called a covenant.

I do not stand upon the term, though it seems to be best represented to our conceptions under the notion of a covenant, and the scripture delivers it to us under the form of a treaty and debate, *Isa. 49*. Though the Father, Son, and Spirit have but one will essentially, yet in this affair they are distinctly considered as two persons, treating and agreeing in one point upon certain conditions. Or as † there was a new habitude of will in the Father and the Son, toward each other, that is not in them essentially, and it is called new, as being in God freely, not naturally. Such a covenant is acknowledged by most. Arminius confesses it to be pretty clear from, *When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, Isa. 53. 10*; in his oration *De sacerdotio Christi*. And some of the greatest jesuits, as Suarez, Tirinus on *Isa. 53. 10*, which is much; for asserting this covenant, the doctrines of election, efficacious grace, and perseverance of that seed are established.

That there is such a covenant, I shall offer some considerations.

1. As there was a covenant made with the first Adam for himself and his posterity; so it is very likely there was *a covenant made with the second Adam*, for himself and those which were chosen in him. Though this covenant of redemption be not the same with the covenant of grace, yet something in this covenant of redemption did concern the seed of Christ. Upon the account of this covenant, God is

* Baxter, Aphor. Thes. 2. † Dr. Owen against Biddle cap. 27.

the *God of Christ*, *Psal.* 89. 26, & 40. 8; and you have Christ calling *God his God*, *Rev.* 3. 12, no less than four times in that verse. He is a surety of the covenant of grace; there was then some other previous treaty whereby Christ entered into terms of suretyship.

2. Christ is said to be *faithful*, *Heb.* 3. 2. As obedience implies a precept, so faithfulness implies a trust, and a promise whereby a man hath obliged himself to perform that trust, according to the direction given him. And Christ is said to *trust* God, *Heb.* 2. 13. As a precept is a formal object of obedience, so a promise is a formal object of trust: as he had a command, so he had a promise, both which imply a covenant.

3. Christ's *prayer* does in various parts manifest this; he does not only intreat and petition, but he challenges something as due to him, upon the account of what he had done; in *John* 17, he seems to run altogether upon a covenant strain, which must suppose some agreement and promise on the Father's part. God had not else been obliged to accept what he had done, nor could our Saviour have challenged it at the hands of God. A claim implies a promise preceding, annexed to a condition, to be done by the party to whom the promise is made, which being performed, gives a right to demand the reward. And hence, perhaps, it is that he calls God *righteous Father*, appealing therein to the faithfulness of God in this business. And indeed the mediatory covenant seems to me by that to be the ground upon which Christ builds his whole intercession, *John* 17; that being a transcript of it, and the pleas there being drawn by a strong compact.

4. This treaty is *distinctly* evidenced, *Isa.* 49. 3, 4, 5, 6, from which chapter to the end of that prophecy, there seems to be a continued discourse concerning Christ. Christ directs his discourse to the Gentiles, acquainting them with the manner of this

treaty. *Listen, O isles, unto me, and hearken, ye people, from far*, ver. 1.

(1.) God calls out Christ by the name of *Israel*; *And said unto me, i. e. the Lord, Thou art my servant, O Lord, in whom I will be glorified*, ver. 3. The name of the body being given to the head, as the name of the head is given to the body. The church, in union with Christ the head, is called Christ, 1 Cor. 12. 12, which some think also to be the meaning of, *The promises were made to Abraham and his seed; not to seeds as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed which is Christ*, Gal. 3. 16, Christ mystical. I will be glorified in thee, as the head of the Jews, to prepare them a spiritual people for me.

(2.) Christ thinks this *too low*; *Then I said, i. e. he whose mouth God had made a sharp sword, "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work is with my God"*, ver. 4. A small income for so great pains and cost. What shall I glorify thee only in Israel? It is but little glory thou wilt get from so small a handful that will believe in me among them; however I refer myself to thee, O Father, and will stand to thy judgment. It is a glorious thing to be the Redeemer of Israel; yet it seems to be too narrow a field for me to run my race in. Judge of the greatness of my pains; and though I shall be glorious in thy eye, though Israel be not gathered, yet consider whether so great an undertaking will not require a greater reward than a few Israelites. Thou shalt, O Father, be glorified in me; for I foresee that few of the Jews will embrace my doctrine; I shall spend my strength, prayers, and blood for nought." *הבל תהו* the word used to express the chaos before it was formed into a world. It will be as a thing without form, a very little part of a new creation. Christ was at first God's angel to Israel, and before his coming in the flesh, had no other nations, but as some sparklings of them were proselyted to

the Jews ; and therefore the Gentiles are said to be *a people that he knew not*, Isa. 55. 5. i. e. that he did not actually possess as his peculiar, in that manner as he ruled in Israel, though the providential government of all nations was committed to him. But after his exaltation in his human nature, he had the possession of them. Therefore

(3.) Christ then declares God's *enlarging his terms* ; *My God shall be my strength*, ver. 5. Which words some take by themselves, as the beginnings of God's further grant. My God was my strength, he added courage to me by enlarging his gift ; which is expressed, ver. 6, *And he said, it is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel ; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.* The word *also* represents as it were a former sticking in the Jews. It is too low a thing to take flesh, sweat, labour, and die for one nation ; thou shalt spread thy tents to the end of the earth, and have the Gentiles for thy possession. When God saw me ready for so high a work, he did in his treaty extend the bounds of my power and advantage further. He said the limits of Israel were too narrow, the gain of Israel too light a recompence for so great a labour. God is brought in here proposing ; Christ grieving at the narrowness of it, yet complying with it. God making a second proposal, wherein Christ acquiesces ; and no further debate is mentioned, after the Gentiles were cast into his lap. Whereupon some make a double decree, or at least two parts of the decree of salvation :—1. For the conversion of the Jews. 2. A decree for the conversion of the Gentiles.

5. The notion of a treaty and covenant is suitable to our conceptions, and gives us a *distinct account* of the methods of redemption ; and also of the ground of the salvation of the fathers, who died before the coming of the Redeemer in the flesh. In order of

conception, the first resolution was this, that man should be redeemed; the second, by what ways and means this redemption should be wrought; and how to make it sure, that there may be no revolt again. The second person is chosen for this undertaking; we must then conceive his voluntary consent to this, and also some terms upon which he undertakes it, which is necessary to every action according to the rules of wisdom. Had not this way of redemption been settled and stated, the fathers before and under the law, could not have been saved; for they were saved by faith; faith could not be without a promise; a promise could not be without a previous ascertaining the method of redemption; had Christ only consented to it at the time of his coming into the world, there had been no ground of any promise before, because the consent of the Redeemer had till that time been uncertain; but the promise, supposes his consent positively given, before the promise was made.

Again, the covenant of grace is as ancient as the first promise of the seed of the woman. And since the grace the patriarchs had, was communicated by virtue of a covenant of grace, it implies that there was an agreement between the Father and the Son; for it is by this agreement the covenant of grace is established. Faith in a Mediator, the condition of that covenant, supposeth the settlement of the Mediator. We cannot suppose how any thing could be bestowed upon men by virtue of a covenant of grace, before the Redeemer had actually merited, without this agreement; for whatsoever was bestowed, was given upon the account of that merit to be wrought in time; therefore at least a promise of so meriting must precede. As articles of agreement are made among men, before the sealing of writings and payment of the money, by virtue of which articles there is some kind of right conveyed.

Upon the account of this agreement, the Spirit was given to some particular men, but to very few, and in

a less measure; for it was not congruous, that there should be as great an effusion of the Spirit before the actual payment required for it, as after. How this could be without a designation of the person of Christ to this work of redemption, and a voluntary undertaking on his part, and how there could be this designing and appointing him to it, and his accepting of it, without some terms in the nature of a covenant, between the Father and the Son, cannot so distinctly and easily be conceived by us. But such a notion as this, makes the whole work more obvious to our weak understandings.

For a close of this part, I shall direct you to *Psa.* 89 throughout, where this covenant is very plainly mentioned, and the whole contexture of the psalm discovers the design of it to be, to set forth some higher person than David; and seems to be too magnificent and lofty for an earthly prince. *Mercy shall be built up for ever, thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens,* ver. 2. But how was it established in the heavens? ver. 3. In making a covenant with his chosen, and swearing to David his servant, *Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations.* Here indeed was faithfulness established in heaven. This will be more remarkable, if the notion of a learned * man of our own, be true. That this psalm was penned *in the time of the Israelites' bondage in Egypt*, by Ethan the son of Zerah, and grand-child of Judah, the son of Jacob, who is mentioned *1 Chron.* 2. 6. Therefore called Ethan the Ezrahite, or of Zerah, who was the son of Judah. Though there is mention made of Ethan in the time of David, *1 Chron.* 15. 17, 19, and though David be often mentioned in this psalm, yet, saith he, that was done prophetically; howsoever it is, the psalm is understood of Christ by most of our interpreters. And Christ is several times called David in the prophets, who lived after the

* Dr. Lightfoot's gleanings on *Exod.* 9. 2.

time of David. Why might not David be prophetically mentioned many years before his birth, as well as Cyrus was by the prophet Isaiah, some years before his? Some make this *covenant of redemption* the same with the *covenant of grace*: but they seem to be two distinct covenants.

1. The *parties* are *distinct*. In the one, the Father and the Son are the parties covenanting: in the covenant of grace, God and man. In the mediatory covenant there were two persons equal: in the covenant of grace there is a superior, God; and an inferior, man.

2. The *conditions* are *different*. Death and satisfaction for sin thereby, was the condition of the covenant of redemption; faith is the condition in the covenant of grace; death required on Christ's part, faith required on man's part. The giving Christ a seed, and eternal life to that seed, is the condition on God's part to Christ; the giving eternal life only to the party believing, this is the condition on God's part in the other. So that the reward in that covenant is larger than the reward promised to us in the covenant of grace. In the covenant of grace the condition runs thus; *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*. In the covenant of redemption, the condition runs thus, *makethy soul an offering for sin, and thou shalt see a seed*. The promises of God to Christ, or rather God absolutely considered in that covenant, was the object of Christ's faith; God in Christ is the object of our faith in the covenant of grace: believing in Christ, could be no condition in the covenant of redemption, as it is in the covenant of grace. Christ must be then the object of his own faith, not his Father's.

3. The *time* of making these covenants is different; the covenant of grace was made in time, after man had broke the covenant of works; the covenant of redemption was made from eternity. *I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth*

was, when there was no depths I was brought forth, while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world; set up as Mediator, rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, *Prov.* 8. 24, 25, 31. He rejoiced in angels, the chief parts of his creation as God; in the habitable parts of the earth as Mediator. The revelation of the covenant of redemption was in time, but the stipulation was from eternity; the Father and Son being actually in Being, and so stipulators; the decree of making a covenant of grace, was from eternity; but not the actual covenant, because there was no soul to covenant with; as the decree of creating the world was in time, but the actual creation at the beginning of time. The covenant of redemption is expressed *Isa.* 53, whence we can no more conclude, that it was but then made, than we may say, that Christ suffered then, because his sufferings are spoken of there, as already undergone. It was made when some were given to Christ, and therefore must be as ancient as election, which was before the foundation of the world.

4. Christ is the Mediator of the covenant of grace, *but not the Mediator of the covenant of redemption, but a party, Heb.* 12. 24. He was the surety of the covenant of grace, *Heb.* 7. 22. The covenant of redemption had no surety, the Father and the Son trusted one another upon the agreement; the covenant of grace is confirmed by the blood of Christ; but we cannot say, that the covenant of redemption was confirmed properly by that blood, any more, than as the shedding of his blood was a necessary article in that covenant.

5. Christ performed *his part* in the covenant of redemption; and by virtue of this mediatory covenant, performed the covenant of works; but he confirmed, not performed, the covenant of grace.

6. By the covenant of redemption, Christ could *challenge his reward* upon his own account. But by the covenant of grace, believers have a right to the re-

ward only upon the account of Christ; there is an intrinsic worth in the obedience of Christ whereby he merited; for there was a proportion between it, in regard of the dignity of his person, and the infiniteness of God; but there is no intrinsic worth in that grace, which is the condition of the covenant of grace, to merit any thing; there was a condition of a valuable consideration required of Christ; but the condition required of us, hath no valuable proportion to the greatness of the reward, The reward was of debt to him, because what he performed, was by his own strength; of grace to us, because what we perform, is by the strength of another. And though the exaltation of Christ is called a free gift, *he hath given him a name above every name*, *ἡγαρίσταιο*, that is in respect of the whole economy of the mission of Christ, and the manifestation of him, which is an act of God's free grace to us, *Phil. 2.9.* And in his exaltation he is considered as appearing for us, and receiving from the Father all for our good; and because it was an act of free grace to us, to unite the second person in the Trinity to our flesh.

7. The mediatory covenant *respects others* in Christ, as well as Christ himself, viz. his seed and the giving them glory. In the covenant of grace, the promise respects only the particular person that believes; it regards none else but the particular person, answering the terms of that covenant; no person can challenge any right upon another's believing, but must believe himself if he will be within the compass of the covenant. But Christ upon the performance of the condition of the mediatory covenant, could challenge not only for himself, but for others; and all that were to be his seed, and were to believe on him to the end of the world, because that covenant respected not only himself but others upon those conditions he was to perform; for the redemption, justification, and happiness of believers are promised to Christ upon the condition of dying. All the seed of Christ are in

the covenant of redemption, before they are regenerate, but not actually in the covenant of grace, and under the influence of the special benefits of it, till they are regenerate : as all mankind were in the loins of Adam, but not guilty of his pollution till their natural generation.

8. If the covenant of grace, and that of redemption were the same, then Christ should be both the *testator, and a party*. Christ is the testator of the covenant of grace ; a testator makes not a will to bequeath legacies to himself.* So that these two covenants are distinct ; they agree in the common nature of a covenant, that there are conditions to be performed, and privileges thereupon to be enjoyed. But the conditions and privileges are distinct. They agree in this that the salvation of the seed is promised in both covenants ; it is promised to the believer upon his faith ; it is promised to Christ in the behalf of the seed upon his suffering. And further, the covenant of redemption is the foundation of the covenant of grace. In the covenant of grace, Christ, or God in Christ is the object of faith. Christ had not been the object of faith, had not such an agreement between the father and the Son preceded. How is Christ the object of faith, but as dying ? what force had his death had without some compact between the Father as the principal party wronged, and the Redeemer as the person satisfying ? The everlastingness of the covenant of grace depends upon the perpetuity of the covenant of redemption. *My covenant shall stand fast with him, his seed will I make to endure for ever, Psal.* 89. 28, 29.

This covenant between the Father and the Son must be broken, before the covenant of God can fail to a believer. Upon this account Christ is said to be *given for a covenant to the people, Isa.* 42. 6. A covenant to the people, i. e. to bring the people into

* Bulkly of the Covenant. p. 35.

covenant with me ; as being the foundation of the covenant of grace ; upon which account he is called the *peace*, *Eph. 2. 17*, as being the foundation, and cause of peace between God and man ; and all the promises as established by his death, are *yea, and amen in him*, they receive their validity from his death, and his death receives its validity from the covenant of redemption. He thereby performing what was required on his part, settled the covenant of grace between God and us for ever unrepealable, and it had not its full settlement, but in the establishment of this. Upon the account of this covenant, the right of Christ as a testator bequeathing the inheritance is grounded, for he could not as a testator bequeath what he had no right unto. His testament was made by him, not as God, but as *Mediator by means of his death*, *Heb. 9. 15. 16.*

Therefore as Mediator he had a right, which cannot well be supposed without some precedent agreement between the Father and the Son, because the right originally resided in the Father. And this covenant of redemption is the ground of our hope and faith ; *In hope of eternal life, which was promised before the world began*, *Tit. 1. 2.* The hope believers have of eternal life springs up originally from that promise made by the Father to the Son, before the foundation of the world : for the promises of the covenant of grace, were included in this covenant of redemption ; and to be made good, when Christ made the conditions on his part in that covenant good. In this agreement, then, God was in Christ reconciling the world.

(1.) The Father covenants with Christ, that he should *undertake for man as a common head* : to free men from that dreadful condition, wherein God foresaw from eternity they would fall upon their creation. Hence he is called *the second Adam*, as being a public person ; and as Adam had fallen off from righteousness to the love of iniquity, and violated the law

of God ; so the second Adam as a head of many fellows, was to *love righteousness, and hate iniquity, Heb. 1. 9. i. e.* vindicate the honour of God laid prostrate by sin, and restore the righteousness of the law. This being rendered there the ground of his advancement by God as his God, a God in covenant with him, implies that it was the main article insisted on, and a condition in the covenant which Christ was to perform.

Man was a criminal debtor, the debt must be paid ; Christ by agreement puts himself in the sinner's stead, to pay this debt, submits to the revenging arm of justice, and thereby releases the prisoner, *Gal. 4. 4, 5.* he was *made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law* ; as we were under the law, so was Christ to bear the curse of the law for us, that whatsoever power the law had over us in regard of its precepts, Christ was to obey ; in regard of its curses, he was to undergo ; and thus undertaking for us, he was to endure the shock of his Father's wrath, which we sinners were liable to. And therefore he is brought in, offering himself as a surety in our stead ; *Lo I come to do thy will, O my God, Psal. 40. 7* ; thy covenant-will, as thou art my God ; which will was our sanctification by the *offering of his body, Heb. 10. 10*, referring to ver. 7 ; and as being instead of us the principal debtors, he calls our sins **his own** ; (*mine iniquities have taken hold of me, ver. 13.*) as he was our surety ; the debt which a surety engages to pay being legally his own debt, though he did not personally incur it by any crime of his own, or receipt of that for which he stands indebted.

(2.) In order to this, another condition necessarily consequent upon the other, was, **that he was to take a body.** This debt could not be paid, nor the articles of the covenant be performed, but in the human nature, the divine being impassible ; he was therefore to have a passible nature, a nature capable of, and prepared for *suffering, Heb. 10. 5*, a body to suffer

that which was represented by these legal sacrifices, wherein God *took no pleasure*, ver. 6. He was to have a body of flesh, surrounded with the infirmities of our fallen nature, sin only excepted; whereupon Christ doth freely comply, *I come to do thy will, O my God*; I am come to take such a body, which by thy will is allotted to me.

(3.) In this body he was to pay a service and *obedience to his Father*. After this agreement, whatsoever Christ did in the body, falls under the term of obedience to the mediatory law prescribed him. Hence he is called, God's *servant*, *Isa.* 42. 1, and he *took upon him the form of a servant*, *Phil.* 2. 7.. Not as servants were formerly bought with a price, and passed wholly into the right and dominion of another: but a servant, who by covenant and agreement, undertakes an employment by the order of another; for he was such a servant, that he was also *Lord*, *Heb.* 3. 6. and 1. 2. This is expressed; *The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious*, *Isa.* 50. 5. God constituted him his servant by the opening his ear, according to the Jewish custom of boring the ear, and he was not in any thing rebellious: he was to do whatsoever was commanded him to do, and therefore all the time of his life before his death, he acted in obedience to his Father, and did nothing but by his Father's command and order. *As the Father hath given me commandment, so I do*, *John* 14. 31. He stipulated to take upon him the *form of a servant*, *Phil.* 2. 6, 7; which seems to refer to this agreement: and after that, *was made in the likeness of men*, referring to his incarnation; as a man is said to take upon him such a task, when he hath covenanted to do it.

(4.) In this body he was to *die* at last: and therefore his dying is said to be obedience; *He became obedient to death, even the death of the cross*, *Phil.* 2. 8: his dying, and dying so ignominiously upon the cross, was obedience; which implies a command

and order to die, and to die such a death, otherwise it had not been obedience, though it might be termed affection. This was the chief article of the covenant, *when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his seed*, Isa. 53. 10: עוֹשֶׂה is then the third person, and being feminine, agrees well with נַפְשָׁהּ a feminine noun. Other translators read it, *If he shall make his soul an offering for sin*; or rather, according to others, and according to grammar, *If his soul shall make an offering for sin*. In this death he was to respect the satisfaction of God's justice; for it was not a bare offering, but an offering for sin. God in imposing this article, respected this chiefly, as this was the main end of sending him to be an *ἱλασμός*, *God hath sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*, 1 John 4. 10: so it was the main end of this article of dying, which Christ was to respect in his dying; for the regarding the end of any service or command, is a principal ingredient in obedience; by virtue of which covenant and command thereupon, there was an *ought* upon Christ, *Ought not Christ to have suffered those things?* Luke 24. 26. And a command, *I have power to lay down my life, I have ἐξουσίαν authority for I have received a command from my Father*, John 10. 18. Hence his death is said to be determined; *the Son of man goes as it was determined*, Luke 22. 22.

In the first giving himself to God, he gave himself as a ransom to be testified and brought forth upon the stage in time, wherein his mediatory office chiefly consisted, 1 Tim. 2. 5, 6. And methinks Christ intimates this laying down his life for his sheep to be the effect of this mutual agreement between the Father and himself, *As the Father knows me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep*, John 10. 15. It was the effect of their knowledge of one another, not a bare knowledge; for that might have been without Christ's dying; but an intimate conjunction of mind, an approbation on both parts.

This *mind, to take upon him the form of a servant*, was in Christ, *Phil. 2. 5*; and therefore this mind was in his Father, for their minds could not be different; there was a mutual knowledge and agreement in the whole affair, and from this knowledge one of another, did arise the laying down of his life.

God required this sacrifice of Christ *exclusively* of all others in the first treaty, as to any satisfaction, *Heb. 10. 6, 5, 6. Sacrifice and burnt-offering thou wouldst not, in them thou hadst no pleasure; then said I, lo I come*: he pronounced them utterly useless for the satisfaction of justice, though fit to pre-figure the grand sacrifice he intended. And that voice of Christ upon the cross, *It is finished, John 19. 30*; seems to refer to this agreement. I am come to a period on my part, the article on my part is completed, there remain no more deaths for me to suffer. This seems to be a necessary article, very congruous to the wisdom of God, as he is creator, governor and the end of all things. *It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings, Heb. 2. 10.* It became him as a wise Creator, as a wise Governor, as he is the end of all things, to insist upon the sufferings of Christ as the fittest means for the attaining the end he aimed at; for hereby his justice and mercy are glorified.

In the performance, Christ was very *exact in every punctilio*; as they were shewed by the mouths of the prophets, he so fulfilled them. *Acts 3. 18*; and God showed them by the mouth of the prophets as they were determined and agreed upon. The ancient Jews had some prospect of this covenant; one of their writers * says, "God treated with the Messiah; Righteous Messiah, those who are hid with thee, are

* R. Hadars: Chan. in Gen. 1. 1. cited by Mornai. contra Icus, chap. 6. p. 163, &c. Helvic. contra Judæ. Elench. 1. in Thes. 43.

such whose sins in time shall bring thee into grief, thy ears shall hear reproaches, thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, thou shalt be wearied with sorrow. The Messiah answered, Lord of the World, I joyfully take them upon me, and charge myself with their torments, but upon this condition, that thou shalt quicken the dead in my days;" "God," saith the Rabbi, "granted him this, and from that time the Messiah charged himself with all kind of torments;" as it is written, *He was afflicted, Isa. 53.* * So that the death of Christ was not by a fortuitous rencounter of things, nor merely by the violence of the Jewish rage, nor from any inability in his Father, or himself, to hinder so strange an event, but it was the issue of a previous agreement flowing from infinite love, managed by incomparable wisdom, disposing things to so great an end.

* Daille.

PART V.

THE PROMISES OF THE COVENANT MADE TO CHRIST.

The Father promises assistance—Fitness—Protection—Christ was to plead the promises—The Father promised him success—Promised him a numerous seed—A succession in his posterity—Perpetual succession—Grace to draw men to him—He was to take special care of those who were given to him in covenant—Jesus had the Father's promise of glory—Of resurrection—Of a royal inheritance—Of extensive power—Of a perpetual priesthood—And of universal victory—The certainty of salvation—Arguments for it—Believers the seed of Christ—Stability of the covenant—Finished works of Christ—The Father's glory and the salvation of believers inseparable.

IN regard of what Christ was to do and suffer, in the *Fifth* place, the *Father* makes excellent promises to him. 1. Promises of assistance. 2. Of a seed. 3. Of glory.

1. The Father promises assistance.

1. Promises of a *fitness* for it. He had the promise of the Spirit to this purpose. *The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord, Isa. 11. 1, 2, 3*; to distribute all his gifts to

him, in a fulness of measure, in a fulness of duration : all the gifts of the Spirit should reside in him, as in a proper habitation, perpetually ; as the Deity dwelt in the humanity, and was never to forsake it. The human nature being a creature, could not beautify and enrich itself with needful gifts ; this promise of the Spirit was therefore necessary, his humanity could not else have performed the work it was designed for. So that the habitual holiness residing in the humanity of Christ, was a fruit of this eternal covenant. Though the divine nature of Christ, by virtue of its union might sanctify the human nature, yet the Spirit is promised him, because it is the proper office of the Holy Ghost to confer those gifts, which are necessary for any undertaking in the world ; and the personal operations of the Trinity do not interfere. It also might be, because every person in the Trinity might evidently have a distinct hand in our redemption.

2. Promises of *protection* in it : *upon this one stone* there were to be *seven eyes*, *Zech. 3. 10*: seven eyes upon one stone, a special care of him, and counsel about him ; seven, notes multitude, eyes note intention. Providence is signified by eyes in scripture ; a special providence shall be exercised towards Christ in the whole management of his office, and defence of his kingdom : hence he acknowledges, that he was under the choice care of God ; *Wist you not that I am about my Father's business*, *Luke 2. 49*, *ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρὸς*, among those things my Father takes care of, *why sought you me?* Do you not know that I am the choicest jewel of my Father, and that he hath his eye upon me ? As one of the cabinet rarities of my Father. God promised to hide him in the shadow of his hand, preserve him as a shaft in his quiver, in the midst of the rage and fury of his enemies.

He solemnly promises his omnipotence, all his creating and governing power to hold his hand in his

being for a covenant of the people, and a light of the Gentiles, till he had brought *the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house*, Isa. 42. 5, 6, 7. He promises here in the loftiest expressions, to strengthen him so, that he should not be discouraged, but see the blessed effects of his undertaking; he would uphold him tenderly, as a father does his son in his arms, that no hurt may happen to him, and that because he had called him *in righteousness*; or, as some, *our righteousness*, to settle an evangelical righteousness in the earth. He is said therefore to be *made strong* by God for himself; *The Son of man whom thou hast made strong for thyself*. *Psa.* 80. 16; the King, Messiah, whom thou hast strengthened for thyself, so the Targum: the title of Son of Man was by way of eminence given to the Messiah in Daniel, and the title he commonly gave himself in the new testament. This assistance of Christ was represented by the ark which had three coverings, together with the table of shew-bread representing the church, as a type of a special protection to both, whereas other consecrated things had but two coverings.

3. This assistance was to run through *the whole course of his mediation*. He was to be assisted in his conflict, and in his success, while his soul was travailing, and while he was triumphing. He should not be discouraged, till he had *set judgment in the earth*, Isa. 42. 4. It is a *Meiosis*, he shall be mightily encouraged, till he have wrought a perfect deliverance for his people: and there shall be a supporting hand under him till he hath completed the work of redemption: he should stand, and be established, and *feed in the strength of the Lord*. *In the Majesty of the name of the Lord his God*, Mic. 5. 4. He should gather, rule, and save his sheep in the choicest of God's strength, as he was his God, i. e. a God in covenant with him, and had appointed him to be *the*

Judge of Israel, ver. 1, and this, till he should be *the peace*, ver. 5, not only laying the corner-stone by his death, but the top-stone by his exaltation.

4. Christ was to *plead* these promises, and encourage himself in them. He was to plead them; *He shall cry unto me, thou art my Father, my God, and the rock of my salvation*, *Psa.* 89. 26. After the repetition of the promises of strength and assistance, ver. 19, 20, 21, &c. he was enjoined to put those covenant promises in suit, and then he should be made the *first born, higher than the kings of the earth, and his covenant should stand fast with him*; as though God promised him the Gentiles for his possession; yet he was to ask it, *Psa.* 2. 8. In this covenant there was an injunction upon Christ to intercede and plead for himself, and for his people; so that the intercession Christ manages in heaven for the completing of those promises, which were formerly in that covenant, or depended upon it (as all the promises in the covenant of grace,) is an article in that covenant, and therefore will be kept up, till all enemies are made his footstool, and death, which is the last, swallowed up in victory. Christ encouraged himself in those promises; by these God made him hope when he was *upon his mother's breasts*, *Psa.* 22. 9; and he prophetically pleads them, ver. 10, 11, *I was cast upon thee from the womb, be not far from me, for trouble is near*, *Acts* 2. 29.

It was an high satisfaction to him, that he should not be moved, therefore *he set God always before him*: in regard of confidence, and supply of strength, his eye was not upon him in one strait or two, but in the whole affair, *Psa.* 16. 8, 9, he had a confidence that God would be *at his right hand*, which signifies to be an helper, and fellow-champion in fight for the weakening of his enemies: * It being a metaphor taken from conflicts, where he that is at the right

* Rivet in *Psal.* 16. 8.

hand of his companion, first exposes himself to danger, and receiving the enemies' force, defends his associate from the blows; the same expression is used of standing by Christ; *The Lord at thy right hand shall strike through kings, Psa. 110. 5.* How loftily does he express his confidence in it! *The Lord God will help me, therefore have I set my face, as a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. The Lord God will help me, who is he that shall condemn me? Isa. 50. 8, 9, 10;* and challenges all the power of earth and hell to contend with him, since he had the promise of God to justify him. *My God shall be my strength, Isa. 49. 5,* my God in covenant with me. And the apostle brings him in declaring his trust in God; and *I will put my trust in him, Heb. 2. 13.* And he acknowledges that the preservation of his disciples, and consequently all his people enjoy by him, is through the *name of his Father, John 17. 12.* He acknowledges his powerful assistance in every particle of his work; *I have kept them in thy name.*

2. Promises of a *seed*, as the success of his undertaking, *Isa. 53. 10. 11.* He was first in order to die, and then to see his seed: *when his soul shall make an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall see the travail of his soul;* his grief and pain shall not be fruitless: he was to have a flock to guide as a shepherd, members to animate as a head, a spouse to cherish as a husband, children to breed up as a father, subjects to reign over as a king. There was a designation of some to him for those relations at this first agreement, which he acknowledges as a donative from his Father. *Thine they were and thou gavest them me, John 6. 6.* *Thine* by election and creation, *mine* by donation and merit; they belonged to Christ as God before, though originally to the Father as the fountain of the Deity; but now to Christ by another tie, as Mediator, as jewels to be made up by him: upon the account of which gift by compact, he calls them his sheep before their actual infolding, *John 10.*

15, 16. The promise made to Abraham of the blessing of the nations in his seed, is said to be made to Christ, *Gal. 3. 19, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made, which seed is Christ*, ver. 16. And some interpret, ver. 17, *The covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ*, εἰς χριστόν, for to Christ, as *Eph. 1. 5, εἰς αὐτόν*, for ἑαυτῷ, and *Col. 1. 20, reconcile all things εἰς αὐτόν to himself*; but howsoever the promise to Abraham is certainly grounded upon a promise to Christ, that in him who was Abraham's seed, all nations should be blessed; whether that *Hos. 14. 5. 6*, be a promise to Christ, who is called Israel, or rather a promise or prophecy concerning the church, of the beauty of Christ's seed as a *lily*, the firmness as a *cedar*, and the fruitfulness of an *olive*.

1. God promised him a *numerous seed*, like the dew that falls at the dawn of the morning in abundance upon the flowers and plants of the earth; *the dew of thy youth from the womb of the morning, Psal. 110. 3. Mich. 5. 7*. As the dew upon the grass: as the poets call the dew the tears of the morning, so was this the fruit of Christ's tears and blood; they were upon his ascension to flock to him from all quarters of the world. He promised to *bring his seed from the east, and gather them from the west*; he would *say to the north, give up; and to the south, keep not back; bring my sons from far and my daughters from the ends of the earth, Isa. 43. 5, 6. More shall be the children of the desolate, than the children of the married wife, Isa. 54. 1*, saith the Lord. The Rachel of our mystical Jacob, that had remained so long barren, should be suddenly mother of a numerous train. Then was our Saviour Israel indeed, one that prevailed with God, as the word signifies, to enlarge the lines of his inheritance to the Gentiles. He was to *speake peace to the heathens, Zech. 9. 10*. And according to this article, God enlarged the tents of the church, so * that twenty-three years after the publica-

* Daille Serm. sur. Psal. 110. 2, 3. p. 605.

tion of the gospel, not only Syria and Arabia, and the bordering provinces on Judea, were full of christians ; but Asia, Italy, Spain, and the chiefest of the western part. And Tacitus says, that in the eleventh year of Nero, which was thirty-one years after Christ's ascension, Rome, the capital city of the world, swarmed with men professing the name of Christ.

The death of Christ was to be more fruitful than his life, and being *lifted up* upon the cross, he was to *draw all men* after him, and gather a plentiful harvest of all kindreds, tongues, and nations ; a mighty generation to be new-born to serve him. He was to be cast into the ground, that *seed should spring up from him*, John 12. 24. He was to be dead in reality, as Isaac in figure, that he might be the everlasting father of many nations. Thus when he was on his part to be laid low as a root in the earth, by making his soul an offering for sin ; God, the husbandman of this vine, promises to bring forth a new set, an abundance of branches sprouting up from him. They should come *from afar off and build in the temple of the Lord*, Zech. 6. 15. Gentiles as well as Jews should be knit together as lively stones to rise up for a temple to the Lord.

(2.) God promises a *succession* of seed. *His name shall be continued as long as the sun*, Psa. 72. 17. *וְנִמְנֵם, filiabitur*, his name shall be *childed* in him, as the name of a man is continued successively in his posterity. It is not only one morning that the rich and plentiful dew shall fall from heaven upon the hearts of men, but successively to the end of the world ; as long as this *sun of righteousness shall rise* in any horizon, and the day dawn before him. Grace shall be dropped upon the hearts of men for a succession of seed, till in the last generation a period be put to the world. Seed shall be springing up, till the last fire seize upon the world, at which time there shall be some caught up into the air to meet him, and a generation among the nations shall be successively blessed in him.

(3.) A *perpetual* seed is promised him. God's covenant shall stand fast with him, and the issue of that is, that his seed will God make *to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven*, *Psa. 89. 28, 29.* His seed and throne are coupled together, as if his throne could not stand if his seed did fail; if his subjects should perish, what would he be king of? If his members should consume, what would he be head of? The promise of a perpetual kingdom, secures the duration of his seed.

This was so considerable an article, that in his plea he insists on it more resolutely, and challenges it with a more vigorous earnestness; *Father I will, that they also whom thou hast given me be with me*, *John 17. 24. &c.* As he had at the first treaty insisted upon the enlarging his inheritance among the Gentiles. He had hitherto been praying only for his own glory, and their preservation and sanctification in the world. He now brings in an *also*: there was an article for the glory of his seed, as well as for the glory of his person: and the word also signifies, that he would be as earnest for them, and insist as much upon the performance of this article which concerned them, as upon that which concerned himself. And the reason rendered signifies thus, *For thou lovedst me from the foundation of the world.* Thou didst manifest thy love to me as Mediator before the foundation of the world, in this promise of a seed, and that they should be perpetually with me to behold my glory.

This was the main article which encouraged Christ to this work, wherein the Father manifested his love to him as Mediator before the world; and therefore in that rich promise wherein God engages the majesty of his name for the strengthening of him, the perpetuity of his seed is insured; *He shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God, and they shall abide, who? ver. 3, the remnant of his brethren that shall return to the*

children of Israel, the brethren of that Ruler in Israel whose goings forth have been from everlasting, they shall abide, Mic. 5. 4. And some thus interpret Isa. 53. 10, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, i.e. the days of his seed. They shall be perpetually with him. For it was the pleasure of the Lord in this compact, to give them a kingdom, as Christ tells his disciples; and this pleasure of the Lord should prosper in the hands of the Mediator.

That which God in his wisdom aimed at in his Son's sufferings, he aimed at certainly in the calling him, and engaging him by covenant to suffer; and that was, the bringing many sons to glory; *It became him in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings Heb. 2. 10.* The end and the means, were becoming propositions for the wisdom of God to make, and as becoming for the wisdom of God to perform; since the means have been fully wrought, the end will be perfectly attained. Christ had those promises of eternal life made to him, as a common head, and a feoffee in trust for them; *Eternal life was promised before the world began, Tit. 1. 2.* Not for himself, who was the eternal Son of God! Could the promise of eternal life to his humanity make him take flesh barely for that? It was promised to him for his seed, for whose redemption he was to lay down his life as a ransom. As God made a covenant with Adam, not as an individual person, but as a nature, he being the representative of mankind, so that if he had stood, his posterity had stood and enjoyed life; so he made a covenant with Christ, to give eternal life to those that should believe in him, who are as really in him by regeneration, as men are in Adam by natural descent.

To which may be added,

(4.) God promised his *grace to draw men to him.* That this seed should be sure to him, God promises to prepare men for him. To remove the stony heart, mollify their hearts, give them hearts of flesh, conquer

their carnal principles and resolutions, and put his Spirit into them, that they might be a fit progeny for Christ. Christ intimates this in that speech, *None can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him, John 6. 44.* As the Father's sending him was the issue of a compact between them, so the drawing any is a fruit of that compact; for Christ removes this from himself, as an article to be performed on his part, as that which lay solely upon his Father's hands, as belonging to him as much as his own mission and the particular circumstances of it: and this promise he had, *That the people should be willing in the day of his power, Psal. 110. 2.* God ordered him indeed to call the nations. *Thou shalt call a nation which thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee, shall run into thee, because of the Lord thy God, for he hath glorified thee, Isa. 55. 5.*

But the vigour which should spirit them to so quick a race to Christ, he reserves to himself; they shall run *because of the Lord thy God*; by his power, as he was the Lord; by his faithfulness, as he was his God in covenant: and the reason rendered, is the *glorifying him*. Which is both an engagement to Christ to call those his Father would have him call, and an engagement on the Father to bring the nations to him. The coming in of nations would redound to his honour; and it is likely this is part of the glory Christ prays for, *John 17. 5*, he does not particularize what that glory was, but some guess may be made by his falling off from that petition to the praying for his people; the preservation of them and keeping those that had been given to him (which includes the bringing them all in) is part of the glory which was promised to him. And this glorifying of him in his people, he begs for at his Father's hand, as being by this covenant to be his act.

The coming in of nations to him, was a great part of the glory of Christ promised him in his covenant. The conversion of every man by the efficacy of grace,

is the fruit of the covenant between the Father and the Son, as God is the Lord God of Christ. And therefore the calling of us by God, is said to be *according to his own purpose, and that grace, which was given us in Christ, before the world was*, 2 Tim. 1. 9, a promise of grace for us, and of our calling in time made then. For what is here called the purpose of God, is called *the promise of God*, Tit. 1. 2, and intimated as a promise in those words *given us in Jesus Christ*, by an agreement with him as our head, as the promise of life upon the covenant of works, was given us in Adam as our common head. And so the promise of taking away the heart of stone, and giving an heart of flesh, may be said to be promises made to Christ, on the behalf of his seed, not of his person; because without this taking away the heart of stone, and giving an heart of flesh, it was impossible the nations or any man, could be blessed in him.

Notwithstanding, that this efficacious grace is from the Father and by his Spirit, by the covenant, yet all thus regenerated may well be called the seed of Christ, because the end of the sufferings of Christ was to merit a spirit of grace for those that were given to him; and the Spirit does nothing in forming a seed, but what rises up from the merit of Christ's sufferings. It is the travail of his soul, though the formation of the Spirit. Christ endured the pangs upon the cross for every new creature, though the Spirit brings it forth into the world. So that they are his seed, as springing up from the merit of his death, and being animated by the power of his life; they are Christ's seed by right of purchase, the Spirit's seed in regard of operation; yet as they are the Spirit's seed, they may be called Christ's seed, because the coming of the Spirit in its plentiful effusion for such an end, was a fruit of his death and his ascension, John 16. 7. He was sent by him, as the greatest gift of his royalty.

(5.) There was *something* which concerned Christ

to do in this article of a seed, he was to take a special care of them. There was not only a may, but a must bring; *Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, John 10. 16.* He was to call them, and the Father would draw them, and he was to bring them into one fold with the Israelites; and this arises from this compact, or the mutual knowledge the Father and he had of one another; the mutual agreement, which was the cause of laying down his life, ver. 15. Knowing, in God, sometimes signifies election, *2 Tim. 2. 19.* God had chosen Christ to this end, and Christ had accepted of it to this end. These he was to teach, *Isa. 8. 16.* Those which he calls *children*, which the Lord had given, are, ver. 18, called his disciples, among whom he was to seal the law; whom he was to instruct in that knowledge of God which was eternal life; and manifest his name to them, *John 17. 2, 3, 6.*

And particularly, he was to instruct them in this great doctrine we are now treating of. *Now they have known, that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee, ver. 7.* Which was indeed the manifestation of the name of his Father, which he had spoken of, ver. 5, that all things which I do, are by thy appointment, order, and assistance. I have ascribed nothing to myself, but magnified thy love, as the sole fountain of all that I have done; which was necessary, for I doubt many men think the Father to be cruel and full of hatred to his creatures, and that he was over-persuaded to redemption by the importunities of his Son: as a severe prince might be mollified by the supplications of his heir. It was not so; and Christ was to acquaint men with the true notion of God, and what his thoughts and affections were concerning them, and to shew him to be a proper object of faith in this business.

He was to use a great tenderness towards them, he was not only to gather the lambs with his arm and

power, but to carry them in his bosom. Not only to lead them, but *gently to lead them*; to have a special care of them, *Isa.* 40. 11. When they were given to him, they were given with some rules and orders how he should manage them, and he was to have his eye not only upon the flock in general, but upon every one in particular, that as any of them were weak, he should use them with more gentleness; take such an one in his bosom; he should have seven eyes upon the weakest, as his Father had upon him the corner-stone: he is therefore said to *know his sheep*, *John* 10. 14, every one in particular, as he knows the stars by name, otherwise the foundation of the Lord, this covenant of redemption, which is the foundation of all his proceedings, could not stand sure. The Father knew them in particular, when he gave them to Christ; Christ knew them in particular, when he received them from him.

It seems also that by this covenant he was to bring every conquering soul to a triumph, and he had power given him to this purpose, *John* 17. 2. In the perfection he promises to them that overcome, he seems to refer it all to the covenant with the Father; *He would make them pillars in the temple of his God, write upon them the name of his God, and the name of the city of his God, which is new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from his God*, *Rev.* 3. 12; where he mentions God as his God in every reward he promises the victorious souls in the church of Philadelphia, four times in that verse, as I have observed before.

3. Promises of a *glory* upon his suffering. As he was to endure the cross, so he also was to enjoy the crown. The enduring the cross was an article on his part, the bestowing a crown was an article on God's part; it was testified before by the prophets, that sufferings should precede, *the glory follow*, *1 Pet.* 1. 11. The solemn inauguration into all his offices, was after his making reconciliation; making an end of sin, bringing in everlasting righteousness, and

thereby shutting up all prophecy and vision, because all the prophecies tended to him, and were accomplished in him; and then as manifesting himself the most holy, he was to be anointed, i. e. fully invested in all the offices of *king, priest, and prophet*, *Dan. 9. 24.* The compact runs thus: Do this, suffer death for the vindication of the honour of my law, and thou shalt be a priest and king for ever.

He could not therefore be solemnly installed, till he had performed the condition on his part (for the promise was made to him considered as Mediator, or God-man) then it was that he was advanced; for the ground of his exaltation is fixed wholly upon his sufferings. *Wherefore God hath highly exalted him*, i. e. because *he became obedient to the death of the cross; God hath given him a name which is above every name*, *Phil. 2. 9*; and because *he loved righteousness*, therefore God as his God covenanting with him, hath *anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows*, *Heb. 1. 9*, therefore he hath given him a glory, as a just debt due to the price paid, the sufferings undergone, and the obedience yielded to the mediatory law. Therefore the glory Christ prayed for, which he *had before the world was*, *John 17. 5*, may be understood of that glory which he had in promise to be given to him upon the completing the work he then engaged for. For this covenant was not about giving him his essential kingdom, for that belonged to him by nature, as he was God equal with the Father. But the mediatory kingdom belonged to his office by a particular grant.

There were two works of Christ, works of humiliation, which were suffering and dying; which were voluntary, not natural works; no natural tie upon him as the Son of God to undergo them, but a moral tie after agreement and promise. There are regal works which were conferred on him by his Father, that he should be honoured and adored in the world as Mediator; *Worshipped by all the angels of God*, *Heb.*

1. 6, when the glory of his Deity should be manifested in the humanity, which had been so long veiled, and had but now and then beamed out : and this full shine of the Deity through the humanity, was a new mode of glory acquired by the right of his death.

(1.) He had a promise of *resurrection*. As he had a power or authority by command to *lay down* his life, so he had a power and authority by promise to *take it again*, *John* 10. 18. His heart was glad, his glory rejoiced, his flesh had hope in his sufferings ; the ground of which hope was, the assurance from his Father, *that his soul should not be left in hell, nor his Holy One* (one so holy in the undertaking, and so holy in the execution) *see corruption*, but should be reduced again to the path of life more glorious, and attended with a *fulness of joy*, *Psa.* 16. 10, 11. It is contained in the promise of seeing his seed ; for if he were to remain dead, how should he see his seed ?

(2.) A promise of a *royal inheritance*. The *appointing* him in the human nature, *heir of all things*, which is distinguished from that power he had over all things by right of the creation of them, as the person by whom God made the worlds. That power was natural, this by appointment ; the inheritance that belonged to Adam, as the head of the lower creation, being forfeited by him, was restored to the human nature of Christ ; which Christ was so pleased with, in the first grant, that he esteems it *a goodly heritage*, *Psa.* 16. 6, which appointing him head and heir of all things, was for the behalf of the church his spiritual seed ; *The head over all things to the church*, *Eph.* 1. 22.

(3.) An *extensive power*. In heaven as well as earth, *Matt.* 28. 18 ; not only to judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations, *Mic.* 4. 3, but to be the head of principalities and powers. That *every knee in heaven, and under the earth, as well as in the earth, should bow down to him, and every tongue*

should confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, who appointed him, *Phil. 2. 10, 11.* A power over all flesh was granted to him, and claimed by him, as a glory given him by promise upon his glorifying of his Father; *Glorify thy Son, as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him, John 17. 2.* A power over the seed of the serpent, the whole flesh as it stood in opposition to spirit, and the interest of the redeemed ones; for it was granted to him as a feoffee in trust for the use and behoof of his seed; and to be exercised by him in subservience to the eternal happiness of his people, the great design and fruit of reconciliation.

He had power before his suffering; for as God saved men upon the promise of his suffering, so upon the same promise he committed all power of judgment to him; but the solemn investiture and publication of it, was at his resurrection and ascension; *God hath made that same Jesus whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ, Acts 2. 36.* For the setting him at his right hand in the human nature, was a full declaration and confirmation of the right of that power, which he had acquired by his death; therefore he prays for his glory, and pleads a deed of gift for it, which was by this agreement, and therefore desires a full investiture of it, as it had been agreed on, first to be asked by him, and then given by God; *Ask of me, Psalms 2. 8.*

(4.) A perpetual and royal priesthood, *Psalms 110. 4.* And indeed all the rights of the first-born, which were the right of government, and the right of priesthood; by virtue of which he was to perpetuate the virtue of his expiation, and also *purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they might offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness, Mal. 3. 2.*

(5.) An universal victory. The propagation of his kingdom in all parts of the world; *The isles shall wait for his law, Isaiah 42. 4;* the conquests of many hearts

by his Spirit, the willingness of people in the day of his power, the subduing some rebellions by the sword of his mouth, others by the sword of his arm, when *the Lord at his right hand should strike through kings in the day of his wrath*, *Psa. 110. 5, 6.* At last a conquest of all his enemies, the devil, and death, *1 Cor. 15. 26*, which was for the benefit of his people. He had conquered the devil and death in his person; he was to have a complete victory over both in his members: so that we see the encouraging promise made him by his Father, was the purchase of a seed; and the glory of God promised him, was in relation to, and for the advantage of, that seed, that the reconciliation to be purchased for them, might be completely enjoyed by them. Judge then, whether the Father was not signally in this agreement in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.

We have handled this covenant, let us see what confirmation there was of it. On God's part we find an oath; God swears that Christ should be a priest, *Psa. 110. 4.* He is therefore called *the man of God's right hand*, in the prayer of the church, *Psa. 80. 17*, whether for the hastening the suffering of Christ, or for his assistance, is uncertain. *The man to whom thou hast sworn with thy right hand*, so the Targum; the manner of taking oaths being to lift up the right hand; *I have sworn to David my servant*, *Psa. 89. 3*, when he made a covenant with him; though this was spoken to David in the type, *1 Sam. 7. yet ver. 14, I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son, is applied to Christ, Heb. 1. 5.* And he swears by his holiness; *Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David, his seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me*, *Psa. 89. 36.*

By David I understand Christ; once, i. e. once for all, irrevocably, unchangeably, and that by his holiness, by all that will fit him for a Governor and Judge of the world, by that holiness which he chiefly aimed to advance by this undertaking of his Son; as I am

an holy God, and desire my holiness may be trusted by this undertaking, I will stand to my word, by that holiness which is the beauty of every attribute; without which, neither power, mercy, justice, nor wisdom could be perfections worthy of a God, as they could not be, if holiness could not be ascribed to every one of them, holy power, holy mercy, holy justice, and holy wisdom. By his holiness which comprehends all his attributes, which would fail, should he violate his oath; whereby it appears that this of settling the seed of Christ, was the main article which God intended, which his heart was set upon, since he assures it by the strongest bond of an oath, and an oath by that attribute which was so necessary to the being of the Deity, without which we can have no conception of a God; we may conceive God punishing all men by justice, or pardoning all men by mercy; but we cannot conceive a God without holiness, for then we conceive a God without the highest perfection belonging to the Deity, an undeified God.

Now by this seed is not meant Christ, the seed of David, because that David whom he had found as his servant, ver. 20, must be meant of Christ by the greatness of the expression which follows after; and it is the seed of this David he will make to endure for ever; *his seed*, ver. 29, his seed who was the first-born. And though the *word of the oath* is said to be since the law, *Heb.* 7. 28, that must be in regard of the manifestation of it, or rather in order of nature. For in this covenant God excluded all other sacrifices as insufficient; the order in the decree runs thus, first the creation of man, covenant of works, &c. The foresight of the violation of that covenant, the insufficiency of other sacrifices for expiation, then the settling this grand sacrifice and high priest by an oath; for the first call of Christ was upon the inability of other sacrifices to afford God any pleasure, *Heb.* 10. 5, 6, 7; i. e. the foresight of their inability. * It was con-

* Jackson's vol. 2 fol. book 10. ch. 56. p. 302.

firmed also to Abraham by an oath, that the nations should be blessed in *his seed*, *ἐπαγγελθεὶς*, *he mediated by an oath*, Heb. 6. 17 ; the tenor whereof was, that as Abraham was willing to offer his son in a bloody sacrifice to him, so he would offer up his only Son for Abraham, and all such as should follow his example of faith and obedience.

From hence we see the main cause of *unbelief and despair*. It is the ignorance of the Father's interest in redemption ; the ignorance of the transaction between the Father and the Son is the cause of this ; *Because they knew not him that sent me*, John 15. 21 ; they consider not that this was the Father's contrivance, that I am sent forth by him, and ordered by him to do what I do. If we had a clear vision of the gospel, and remembered God as intent upon a way of redemption, we should not nourish that which disparages the whole plot. Such souls look upon him as a God of wrath, rather than a God of peace whose hand is more filled with thunders, than his heart with love ; they regard him as one of a narrow and contracted goodness ; that God minded nothing after man's sin, but preparing his bow, and sharpening his arrows ; hence they have frightful thoughts of God, slavish fears, fretful jealousies, that he will never accomplish their desires, though they seek him never so fervently.

2. See the *blackness* of unbelief. It is as much as lies in a man to make void the end of God, frustrate the covenant of redemption, deprive God of all the glory he was to get by the articles of it, and Christ of the honour of his undertaking, and make the whole covenant insignificant ; rejecting the eternal counsel of wisdom, as well as therejecting *John's baptism*, Luke 7. 30, was so interpreted. Whosoever does not believe upon the declaration of the gospel, endeavours to deprive Christ of a seed as far as he can. And those that endeavour to keep off others from Christ, endeavour as far as their power extends, to make God

violate his oath. This contrivance of God is the greatest master-piece of wisdom and love; it was the most becoming thing God ever set about, most agreeable to his mercy and justice; unbelief does what it can to demolish this fabric of God's erecting, as though the contrivance of his wisdom were a piece of folly, and the beating of his heart only worthy of the spurns of our feet.

Salvation is upon *the most certain terms to every believer.*

(1.) In regard that every believer is *the seed of Christ*. God hath given such to Christ with an absolute will, that they should not perish; Christ by covenant was to take care of them; God by covenant was engaged that Christ should see his seed. He confirmed it by an oath, that his seed should endure for ever. Shall God be defeated of his will, and the design of his everlasting covenant? He committed by covenant the souls of his people to Christ, as his charge, *Jon.* 6. 37, 38, 39. Would God put a charge he values into the hands of impotence or unskilfulness. Will Christ be guilty of dissaffection to his Father? Can he break the trust reposed in him? Will the Father be guilty of unfaithfulness to Christ? Can there be a violation of articles so solemnly made between them? This seed was to be perfect, Christ was to see the travail of his soul, which will be, when he hath given Christ a full possession of that trust he acquired for him upon the cross; but they must wait, for it is with his people as with himself; he obtained a right upon the cross for himself, and them; but neither he nor they are yet in full possession of the right he then purchased.

(2.) In regard of the *firminess* of the covenant between them. The covenant the Father hath made with Christ, is an obligation wherein he stands bound to Christ, and consequently to every parcel of his seed; free grace to us made him a promiser to Christ, and his promise made him a debtor to him: there-

fore if it be possible that the infinitely true God could be false to a temporary promise, how could he be false to his Son, the Son of his dearest love, the Son that he appointed, called out, and put upon this undertaking? How can he be false to his own counsel, and to a solemn everlasting covenant? His truth is a powerful engagement for performance, especially added to that love which first moved him to make this covenant.

The covenant indeed was firm between God and Adam, had Adam stood; but there was not altogether so strong an obligation on God, he never confirmed it by an oath; he never was so much pleased with that, as with this. The greater pleasure any man hath in the promise he makes, and the stronger resolution to perform it, the stronger asseverations he backs it with. To what purpose does Christ give us a draught and epitome of this eternal transaction, as the ground of his pleas in heaven; but that the joys of believers may be full, that they might have his joy fulfilled in themselves? *These things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves,* John 17. 13; that they might have a joy in this consideration of it, as he had in the making this covenant, and performing his part in it; *These things I speak in the world.* I give them this history of our agreement, this copy of the articles between thee and me, that they may read thy eternal counsel concerning their good, and have a strong consolation, and run to this public record in all cases, spread it before, yea, and plead it with thee.

And by virtue of this covenant, though a believer fall into sin, (for it is not possible he can run on in a course of sin) God will reduce him: the afflicting them to that end is a condition ensured in this covenant, *Psal.* 89. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32. God will visit them with rods, but not lash them with scorpions; he will afflict them, but not destroy them; whip them, but not damn them, because he will not take

away his loving kindness from his Son, or *suffer his faithfulness to fail.*

(3.) In regard that Christ has suffered and *performed all on his part.* Christ hath performed his part, by making his *soul an offering for sin* ; he must therefore see his seed, and that to satisfaction, *Isa.* 53. 11, otherwise there would be a breach of covenant and promise on the Father's part ; God was to please Christ, as Christ had pleased him ; and the pleasure is not mutual, unless both be pleased alike. The waisting therefore of every believer through this vale of misery, is a debt God owes to Christ, and a satisfaction necessary to make his happiness as Mediator complete, and which our Saviour may challenge as a due debt by virtue of compact. Will God ever go back from his word, tear the articles on his part in pieces, and so let the strength and blood of Christ be spent for nought?

(4.) In this covenant God hath *united* his own glory, and the salvation of believers together : for in this covenant, wherein God was to be glorified, Christ was to be *his salvation to the ends of the earth*, *Isa.* 49. 3, 6. As he covenanted with Christ for a glory from him ; so by covenant, he gave up the Gentiles to him, and thus having settled them together upon one corner stone, the happiness of a believer is as firmly upon that basis established, as the honour of God. And therefore what the prophet calls the glory of God, *All flesh shall see the glory of God*, *Isa.* 40. 5 : Luke expresseth by salvation, *All flesh shall see the salvation of God*, *Luke* 3. 6 ; and when God had declared his will for the sending Christ, for the redeeming of the prisoners from captivity ; he saith, *my glory will I not give unto another*, *Isa.* 2. 5, 6, 8. I will intrust no other with redeeming work, which is my glory, but this servant of mine ; so that the peace is as firm as God's honour, and can then only cease when God shall cease to love himself, his Son, and his own glory. What greater ground of faith can there be

than this, since God's love cannot reach a strain higher, than to venture his own glory in the same bottom with a believer's happiness?

4. Fly to this *covenant of redemption*, as well as to the covenant of grace, since that is the foundation of this. All other considerations of Christ's death, merit, and every thing stored up in Christ, can give us little hope, unless we consider this covenant, which supports all the other stones of the building. Fly to it when your souls are in heaviness; though there may be sometimes clouds upon the face of God, yet consider those compassions in his heart, when he struck this covenant with Christ: he covenanted to bruise his own Son by his wrath, while he promised to support him by his strength, and the workings of his affections always kept pace with the blows of his hand. The consideration of this will encourage our faintness, silence our fears, nonplus our scruples, and settle a staggering faith. Is a believer in a storm? Here is an anchor to hold him: Is he sinking? Here is a bough to catch at: Is he pursued by spiritual enemies? Here is a refuge to fly to. Sin cannot so much oblige God's justice to punish, as his oath to Christ obligeth him to save a repenting, and believing sinner. These two covenants of redemption and of grace, are as a Hur and Aaron, to hold up the hands of a feeble faith. His love cannot die, as long as his faithfulness remains, nor his peace with the soul perish, as long as the covenant with his Son endures. This covenant of redemption is to be pleaded by us, as well as the merit of Christ's death, because the merit of his death is founded upon this compact.

PART VI.

THE INFINITE SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST FOR
HIS WORKS.

Absolute necessity of this—The divine nature of Jesus—His fulness—Perpetual fulness—Union of two natures in him—He is filled with the Spirit—The Father was the principal cause of his fitness—In what his fitness consisted—Habitual holiness—This necessary as to his office—And his dignity—He was qualified with wisdom and knowledge—With tenderness and sympathy—With mighty power—The Spirit was given to him to secure all the fruits of reconciliation in believers—Improvement.

4. **THE** Father qualified Christ for this great undertaking to make reconciliation. Christ was the vine; *I am the vine, and my Father the husbandman, John 15. 1*; a vine of the Father's planting, a vine of the Father's dressing; and God planted him a noble vine, in order to the bearing branches: he made him a vine fit to cherish those he should insert in him; he is therefore said to be sanctified by the Father when he is sent into the world; *Say you of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, John 10. 36.* Sanctified in order to his mission, or sanctified at his mission, that the glory of God's reconciling love might be manifest by him; sanctified to do the works of his Father, for which end he was sent into

the world, as ver. 37 intimates, *If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.* Much of God's secret counsel was spent about him: whence he is called a polished shaft in his quiver; *In the quiver of his secret counsel wherein he was hid, Isa. 49. 2.* This promise he had in that agreement between them, that the *Spirit of the Lord should be put upon him, Isa. 42. 1.* And for this great end of redemption, as you may read in the following verses in that chapter. And since the end of his undertaking, was to glorify God in the work of redemption; the wisest counsels would be employed to furnish Christ for bringing about the highest glory to God, and happiness to man.

(1.) A fitness for so great a task was *absolutely* necessary. * In regard of his *office.* As he was settled in an office by the Father, so the graces and gifts of the Spirit were necessary to fit the human nature for those great works of the Father, which were to be performed in it. The human nature had been unprofitable without an office, and an office had been unsuccessful without graces and gifts for the execution of it. An office of Mediator, without capacity, fulness, charity, and goodness, had been useless, and to no purpose. *In regard of the greatness of the work he was to do.* Sin had blemished the world, turned all creatures from their true end by man's revolt from the service of God, whereby those creatures which were made to serve a loyal subject, were forced to serve a rebel. The world then was to be restored, the ruins by sin repaired, the sin removed, and the sinner redeemed: as this required infinite skill for the contrivance, so it required infinite fitness for the execution. The glory of God's design required it, which was to make his attributes most illustrious, and display them more magnificently in the work of redemption, than in that of creation: and this being to be done in the human nature, whose fall had necessitated a reparation or destruction, because by

* Moulin, Decad. 4. ser. 1. p. 13, some what changed.

that God was dishonoured; in that therefore the glory of his attributes was to be manifested, it required a mighty fitness for the manifestation of an infinite glory.

(2.) Christ in regard of his *divine nature* was *infinitely* fit, and in regard of the *union* of that to the human *suitably* fit. For in regard of his infinite knowledge, he knew the rights of God in the infinite extent of his glory, and what was fit for the reparation of those rights which had been violated: he knew the infinite holiness of his Father, he knew the utmost malice of the inward workings of sin, which he was to expiate; for he knew all things, for *the Father loves the Son and shows him all things that himself doth*, John 5. 21. As God, he knew what wrong God had sustained in point of honour, and in point of service; and what was necessary to restore the honour to God, and reduce the creature to the service of the Creator. In regard of his infinite holiness; therefore God who is holy, could be sanctified in his righteousness, *Isa. 5. 16*. In regard of his power: as he was the fittest medium by whom God created the world, so he was the fittest medium by whom God might repair the world, and give a new consistency to it; *He was before all things, and by him all things consist*, Col 1. 16. He was *the mighty God, the everlasting Father*, or the Father of the age to come, and therefore *the Prince of peace*, *Isa. 9. 6*.

It was necessary he should be God: as it was necessary he should be man, to make the compensation suitable, because the human nature had committed the trespass; so it was necessary he should be God, to make the compensation sufficient, because God had received the wrong. Two things were requisite; suffering, therefore he must be man; satisfaction by that suffering, therefore he must be God. Two things in justice to be considered; the equity of justice, therefore the nature offending must suffer; the infiniteness of justice, therefore an

infinite person must suffer; he therefore being thus infinite, could answer the infiniteness of God's honour in the reparation, and the infiniteness of our debts in the expiation. For as he had a human nature wherein to merit, so he had a divine nature, whereby to make that merit sufficient.

No *other nature* could be fit; the angelical nature was not infinite, and therefore could not pay an infinite price; the human nature was neither infinite nor innocent, and therefore could not satisfy for infinite guilt. He was to stand under the sin of the world: and what creature could ever be fit to bear so vast a burden? As none but an infinite goodness could exercise so great a patience towards the sins of men, so none but an infinite goodness could pay a satisfaction for them. Now though Christ, as he was the Son of man, *gave his life a ransom for many*, *Matt.* 20. 28; yet the value of the redeeming price arose from it, *as the blood of God*, *Acts* 20. 28. He gave his life as man, but the purchase was made by him as God. It could not have been for our glory, or purchased a glory for us, unless he who was the Lord of glory had been crucified; for *being the express image of God, and upholding all things by the word of his power, he did by himself purge our sins*, *Heb.* 1. 3. So that his shoulders were able to bear the weightiest burden, his strength able to endure the sharpest curses, and his soul able to drink down the bitterest potions.

Christ therefore being God, and united to the human nature, was every way fit, as being God and man in one person, that what the human nature could not do by reason of its imbecility as a creature, the divine might; and what the divine nature could not do by reason of its perfection, the human nature might perform. That God's honour might be repaired by an infinite satisfaction, and man reduced to service by the highest motive, viz. the incarnation

of his Son ; than which, God could not afford a greater.

(3.) The fitness, whether of his divine nature, or his human, did originally *arise from the Father*. The Father, as the fountain of the Deity, did confer on him his natural fitness : by communicating to him the divine nature from eternity, by natural generation. He had a natural fitness as the Son of God, and a gracious fitness as the Son of man ; the natural fitness was from the Father, for *as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself*, John 5. 26. To have life in himself is the property of God, who is therefore called the living God ; and this is given by the Father.

1. All the *fulness* whereby he is fit to reconcile, and accomplish his mediatory work, he is enriched with *from the Father*. *It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell*, Col. 1. 19. It is true, the word Father is not in the Greek text, but is to be supplied from the discourse of the apostle before, ver. 12, where he begins a thanksgiving to the Father. He did not only ordain him to be the head of the church, but he fitted him with whatsoever was necessary to constitute him in that office, and enable him for the exercise of it. By this fulness, is meant both a fulness of the divinity, as he is the image of God, and a fulness of habitual grace, as he is the first born of every creature ; having the rights of the first-born given to him, as *he is the head of the body of the church, and the first-born from the dead*. God would have this great Mediator filled with all the perfection of the Deity, and all the excellence of grace in his humanity, that he might be in this office of mediation every way acceptable to God, and successful for man ; that no fault might be found in him either by God or man, to stave off the acceptance of the one, or the reliance of the other, that so the reconciliation might be in all parts and degrees complete.

2. The Father stored up this fulness in Christ with a mighty *pleasure*. He did not only order the communication of this fulness to him, and the perpetual residence of it in him, for his appointed ends, but he did it with a transcendent pleasure; An *ἐνδοκία*, such a pleasure as he had in his person, as that which answered all his ends, both for his own glory, and his creatures' recovery. As he was the treasury of grace for us, so he was the object of God's delight.

3. This fulness was lodged in Christ, for the making *peace with his Father*, and accomplishing *all the ends of it*. As he assembled all light together, and fixed it in the sun, as a natural type of Christ, to convey light and heat thereby to all sublunary bodies, as also to the stars in the firmament, whence both might derive that excellence they have, and so agree in one point and principle; so he hath espoused together the divine and human perfections in one person, that thereby he might *reconcile all things to himself*; *By him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven*, that both the restoration of the broken peace with men, and the confirmation of the standing peace with angels, might meet in him, and be derived from him, as one centre of both.

For as it *pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell*; so it was a pleasure to him, that it should perpetually reside in him to this end, that peace might be made, and all the intendments and consequents of it be promoted to a perfect issue; that he having an alliance to God by his divinity, and an alliance to man by his humanity, might stand as a perfect Mediator between God and his creature, to make peace and preserve it. For hereby he understood the rights of God to secure them, and the indigencies of man to relieve him. He had his humanity fitted to be a sufferer, and his divinity fitted to be a repairer: the one made him passible, the other able, and the holiness of his person made him acceptable. His being in the form of a servant made him ob-

noxious to suffering; and his being in the form of God, made that suffering meritorious of our peace, that in all respects he might become a Prince of peace both in heaven and earth.

4. We may note also the *constancy* of it; it *dwells in him*. This was the pleasure of the Father, that it should not only be communicated to him to lodge, but dwell in him; not as a private person, but an universal principle; as head of the body, as well as a reconciler, that he might be able to do the works of God, and fill the emptiness of man. God promised to engrave the engravings of this stone, which is ushered in with a repetition of a Behold; *Behold, the stone that I have laid; behold, I will engrave the engravings thereof saith the Lord, Zech. 3. 9*; that men might observe it and the end of it. He would work all habitual grace in him with an indelible character; as the engravings of a stone cannot be razed out without defacing and dissolving some part of the stone at least, sometimes without breaking the whole. The end of this engraving is expressed in the following words, *And I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day*. Some understand it also of his death: and I think it may be understood of both his fitness for suffering, and his actual suffering. The end of this sculpture, was for the taking away sin, and making reconciliation with God by the expiation of it. So that the graces of the Spirit are not only poured upon his head, as that which may be dried up again; but engraven on him, as noting fixedness and duration. Fulness acquaints us with the abundance of this grace, and dwelling signifies the perpetual residence of it, engraving the deep rootedness; and all for this end of redemption.

The fitness of his human nature was the work of the Father, not immediately, but by his Spirit.

1. He is fitted with a *body*. This was *necessary*: man, as constituted of soul and body, had violated the articles of the first covenant: therefore man, as con-

stituted of soul and body, must answer the violations of it. * He was therefore to have a body of the same kind with that man that had broken the covenant, whose punishment he was to remove; therefore he was not to be new made from the earth as Adam was, but to descend from him; otherwise he had not been of the same kind, and so could not satisfy for that kind whereof he was not a part. As the obligation descended upon all men from the first man, so it was fit that one descended from him should satisfy that obligation.

It was also necessary that he should have a *mortal* body: that he might be nearly related to us in all things, sin excepted, and redeem us by his passion. Blood was to be shed, death was to be endured, for we owed to God our life and blood, the *righteousness of God was to be declared*, Rom. 3. 25, which could not be but in the offending nature, his life he must lose, whereby to lay a strong foundation for the removing of sin, with a rich manifestation of God's righteousness. Now to make a body mortal, which was not in itself sinful, was a work only to be wrought by the wisdom of God, whereby to make a salvo for his righteousness, always manifested to his rational creatures. That soul that sins, it shall die; had not Adam sinned, he had not died; our Saviour died, who never sinned; he was therefore to have such a body whereby our sins might be imputed to him, yet not inherent in him.

He was then to have a human nature to suffer our punishment, as well as a divine nature to surmount it. A flesh was necessary to be a sacrifice for sin, as well as the Deity to be a priest. What could he have offered for us, had he not had flesh and blood? without a body, he had been a priest without a sacrifice; without an holy flesh, he had been a priest with a sinful sacrifice. He was to have a body to *bear*

* Sabund. Theolog. Tit. 253.

our sins on a tree. 1 Pet. 2. 24. Yet an holy body, that by the offering of that body *once for all*, we might be sanctified, Heb. 10. 10. As God only could, so he did provide him such a body; this he ascribes to God; *A body hast thou prepared for me*, Heb. 10. 5. A mortal body, fit to be a sacrifice; a body prepared, after the rejection of all other sacrifices wherein God could find no pleasure: a body also prepared to be a reconciling sacrifice, such a body wherein he might do the will of God, i. e. the whole will of God, which was to take away sin.

It was a body so fitted, as to be obedient to the soul; to have no rebellious power in it, against reason and command; but to be fully and readily obedient in all its motions to God; not barely a body, but a body so tempered as to do the service required of it. It was not indeed fit that the body wherein the Deity was to tabernacle,* should be framed by a less wisdom, and slighter order, than the Mosaical tabernacle, which was a shadow of it; which was done by exact order, and by the *inspiration of the Spirit*, filling the workmen with skill, *Exod. 31. 2, 3.*

Yet he was to have a *holy* body, free from any taint of moral imperfection, fit for the service he was devoted to; for which the least speck upon his humanity had rendered him unfit. This could not have been, had he descended from Adam by way of ordinary and natural generation. He had then been a debtor himself, a lamb with blemish, and so wanted a sacrifice for himself. His sacrifice would have been defective, and have needed some other sacrifice to fill up the gaps of it. It was necessary he should descend from Adam in a way of birth, but not in a way of seminal traduction; that he might have the nature of Adam, without the spot. Such a knot could not be untied without infinite skill, nor such a way of

* John 1. 14, ἐσκμν ωοεν.

production be wrought without the infinite power of God.

Therefore, (1.) The Holy Ghost frames this body of Christ, of *the seed of the woman*, that it might be mortal, and have his heel bruised by the devil, *Gen. 3. 15.* Not of the seed of the man in an ordinary way of generation, that it might be without any taint of sin, sanctifying therefore the seed of the woman in a peculiar manner. Wherefore in relation to his humanity, conception and birth, he is *the holy thing*, *Luke 1. 35.* As his body is called, the Holy One in the grave; *Thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption, Psa. 16. 10.* His soul was not in the grave, being separated from the body upon the recommendation of it upon the cross into his Father's hands. And as it was an holy body, so it was a mortal body, called therefore a *body of flesh*, *Col. 1. 22.* This God had appointed and predicted as an extraordinary thing; *The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man; גבר a mighty man, Jer. 31. 22.* By calling it a *new thing*, he points to a miraculous birth of the Messiah, and the word creating, signifies something out of a natural course, next to a mere creation, and God's work as much as creation. A *new thing*, as not being from the old stock; for though his nature was the same with Adam's, * yet he had no taint of original sin; because he was not morally in the loins of Adam before his fall (the promise of his incarnation of the seed of the woman being given after the Fall) whereby the sin of Adam could not be imputed to him. It was therefore a new thing, and an holy thing, according to that new promise after the Fall. Though the Spirit was the immediate agent in fitting this body, yet it was by the appointment and power of the Father; *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee,*

* Owen of the Spirit, p. 136.

Luke 1. 35, where, by the Highest, is understood the Father, the mystery of the Trinity being manifested in the incarnation of the Son of God.

(2.) The *Holy Ghost* makes the union between the divine and human nature. The overshadowing by the power of the Highest unites the two natures, whereby that *holy thing* in the virgin's womb should be called *the Son of God*, *Luke* 1. 35, which could not be without a union of the divine nature to the substance, made of the seed of the woman, by this overshadowing; which is the act of the Father by the Spirit, as being in the *power of the highest*. And this is that which also is called the *gratia unionis*, grace of union, which Christ had from God, whereby the God-head dwelt *bodily* in him, or personally, *Col.* 2. 9, the two natures; the divine, signified by the god-head; the human, by that wherein it dwelt, making up one person; $\Sigma\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha$ among the Greeks signifying not a bare body, but a person; as it does also in common speech among us.

The union of the two natures by a particular conjunction, whereby the divine nature dwelt substantially in the human, and was acted by it in all undertakings, was the work of God by his Spirit. This union of both natures was for the making peace. *And you that were sometimes alienated, yet now he hath reconciled in the body of his flesh through death*, *Col.* 1. 21, 22; Who? he who was *the image of the invisible God*, ver. 15. The image of the invisible Deity, rendered himself visible in the humanity, to reconcile us to his Father, so that by this union, we who are afar off from the Deity, are brought near in his humanity; and the gulf of original sin, which consisted in enmity to God, and which hindered the passage of God to man, or man to God, is filled up, taken away, and the work done in and by him. As he was God, he knew the terrors of hell, because he knew all things; but as God, he could not have experience of them: he

was to have a body of flesh to bear them, as well as he was the image of the invisible God to support that body under them. As man, he was fit to endure his wrath ; and as God, fit to appease it. As man, he was fit to undergo the sharpness of the curse, and as God, able to remove it. As man, he was capable to obey both the moral and mediatory law ; and as God, to transmit the fruit of that obedience to us, which is intimated in these words, *Yet now hath he reconciled, &c. to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprouceable in his sight.* Presenting us, as he is the image of God, in our nature free from sin by the washing of his blood, after he had reconciled us through the body of his flesh : the meriting of reconciliation was wrought in his flesh, but arose from his deity.

Thus Christ had a body, every way fitted with a holy soul, with a glorious indweller, that he might be every way fit for making peace. A body in all things like ours, but without impurity, that he might be our kinsman, and become a Goel, a Redeemer by right of propinquity ; that he might be the suffering Head of the human nature, which he could not be without our nature. Had he taken the angelical nature, which was more excellent in itself, and suffered in that, his sufferings would have been esteemed the sufferings of that whole nature, but not of the human nature, because not partaking of it, and so he could not have suffered for it, unless he had suffered in it ; for since he was to make reconciliation for the sins of the people, *he took upon him not the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham,* because it *behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make this reconciliation, Heb. 2. 16, 17.*

We may note, besides the holiness of his body, it was so framed by the appointment of the Father, and the operation of the Holy Ghost, and tempered with

such affections, as to do this work with the greatest compassion to the fallen nature of man; that whereas he had a holiness to make him faithful to God, so he had a tenderness in his nature to make him merciful to us, for the carrying on this reconciliation, and the ends of it to the highest perfection. So that those two natures thus united by God, made him every way capable, and fit to be a Reconciler, knowing the justice of God's claim, that he might give to God what he knew to be his due, and feeling the infirmities of our nature, that he might purchase that remedy he knew we wanted. Herein we see the incomparable wisdom and love of the Father in fitting Christ, so that he might be in him reconciling the world to himself.

2. He is *filled with his Spirit* by the Father, i. e. with all the gifts and graces of the Spirit necessary to this work. That precious ointment, composed of so many sweet and excellent ingredients, wherewith the Levitical high priest was anointed, *Exod. 30*, was a type of those excellent graces of the great High Priest, whereby he was qualified for the exercise of his offices. As the Spirit espoused the human nature to the divine, so he espoused all his gifts and graces to the human. As the body was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, so his soul was beautified and adorned by the graces of the Holy Ghost, whereby he became *fairer than the children of men, and grace was poured into his lips, Psal. 45. 2. His going forth is prepared as the morning, Hos. 6. 3*, furnished with all things necessary to work out redemption, and free the world from the wrath of God, as the sun is with light to deliver the world from the darkness of the night.

(1.) The subject of these gifts was *the rational soul* of Christ. The human nature was only anointed with the Spirit, the divine nature being infinite, could receive no increase of gifts; it having a fulness of

perfection by eternal generation. Yet though the divine nature stood in no need of those gifts, it did capacitate the humanity of Christ for greater receipts, by reason of its union with it, than any other mere creature was capable of. We must not think, as some may conceive, that the divine nature was instead of a soul to the body of Christ : he had a real rational soul ; for since the whole nature of man was corrupted, both soul and body, the whole nature of man was to be repaired. How could he have suffered in a body without a soul, the wrath due to our souls as well as bodies ? Had he only had a body, he had not taken the human nature, only the meanest and worst part of man, not that which constitutes the man : unless he had been God and man in one person, his blood could not have been called *the blood of God*, and unless he had a soul and body, an entire nature, his blood could not have been the blood of man ; as he was to have a body prepared, so he was to have a soul proportionably furnished.

(2.) He was *abundantly* filled with them, he had *the Spirit not by measure*, *John 3. 3, 4* ; not as light in a room, but as light in the sun : not as water in a vessel where the bounds are visible, but like water in the ocean, where the depths and limits are unknown. In him there was nothing but spirit and fulness, without limits for quantity ; without imperfection for quality ; all the treasures ; the fountain, not the rivers. There are varieties of gifts as there are of stars, and the qualities of them in heaven ; and of flowers, and the beauties of them upon earth ; what were various in others, were entire in him. Others have parcels of those gifts and graces, like Abraham's children by Keturah ; but Christ hath them entire ; as Isaac had an inheritance, as the heir of promise ; so Christ, as the heir of all things, had the possession of the choicest gifts in the treasures of his Father. As God had commu-

nicated an infinite being to him by eternal generation ; so it was convenient to communicate a fulness of graces and gifts to the humanity, as far as it was capable to receive and contain it, because it was joined to so excellent a nature as the divine ; for though he was made flesh, yet he had *the glory as of the only begotten Son of God*.

It was fit therefore he should be *full of grace and truth* in that flesh, *John* 1. 14. It was not congruous, that the Spirit of God should come into the soul of Christ with half his attendants, but with the greatest majesty, with his whole train of excellencies. * Not that the perfections poured out upon his soul by the Spirit of grace and glory were infinite, because those graces were created qualities, and infiniteness can never be ascribed to a creature : and his soul was the subject of them, and that being a creature, was not capable of receiving into it subjectively that which is infinite ; but he had them without measure, as to the kinds of gifts : in the mass, not in parcels.

As to the *degrees* of them ; others have them in a lower degree, as light in a candle ; Christ in the highest degree, as light in the heavens : so that whatsoever pertains to the nature of grace, was conferred on Christ, as whatsoever belongs to the nature of light and heat is stored up in the sun. All his *garments* did *smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia*, *Psal.* 45. 8. As God hath made the sea a treasure of waters, emptied into it from all the rivers of the world : so he hath made Christ a mighty ocean of all perfections, in a vaster quantity, and richer qualities, than any other creature is capable to receive : as the sea is more capacious to receive the perpetual floods, than the greatest river in the world. If the whole creation should be reaped, and gleaned, and stored up in one

* Davenant in Colos. 1, 19.

person, it would be but as the drops of a bucket, to the fulness of Christ, which the Father hath laid up in him.

(3.) These graces were infused into him *at once*. As the new creature has all its parts framed at once, so the head of all the new creatures was principled at once with them. Though in regard of the various exercises of them, they grew up in him by degrees. *Luke 2. 40. The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom*, ver. 52, and shone forth as he increased in age, by new excitations of them by the Spirit of God. Grace came into the soul of Christ, as his soul into his body, or as light into the sun at the creation, not by pieces. But as the soul did not exercise its functions, so his graces did not exert their strength, but by degrees according to the capacity of his age, and occasional occurrences. The anointing of this Spirit was conferred upon him at his incarnation; *when he was made flesh, he was full of grace and truth, John 1. 14*. Also visibly at his baptism, which was his entrance into the exercise of his office, as a visible token of his Father's acceptance of him, now at his inauguration. *Mat. 3. 16, 17*. As David the type was anointed at Bethlehem, the place of his habitation by Samuel, and afterwards at Hebron, when he was actually installed king by the tribe of Judah. The first anointing at his incarnation, was his furniture for his office, that at his baptism his investiture in his office.

(4.) These gifts and graces of the spirit were *necessary* for the *human nature*. * It was necessary that the soul of Christ should exert supernatural acts: there was a necessity of love to God, to spirit him in his mighty difficulties; of faith in God, to derive refreshment from the promises made to him as Mediator, when he should arrive at any conflict; these were

* Sanrez in part. 3. Aquin. Tom. Disp. 1. 18. Sect. 4. p. 368, 369.

supernatural acts in themselves, and so were above the bare natural strength of the soul of Christ, and the powers of it. As the soul of Christ did need a natural concourse to natural actions, as other souls do, and needed the gift of miracles for the working of miracles; so he needed a supernatural grace to exert supernatural acts. It is essential to the nature of a creature to depend upon God for all communications; to act independently, and without the influence of another, is a property of God, not to be derived to any creature: the humanity of Christ being then a creature, could not act of itself without the influence of a superior being; the humanity then did not endow itself; grace is not minted by any creature. It did no more inspire itself with grace, than it did with life.

As God was the Father of Christ, so he was the *Father of grace* to him; the divine nature of Christ gave a personal dignity by union, but conferred not of itself a beauty upon it. Had the divine nature by virtue of its union, elevated the faculties of Christ's soul, he needed not have grown in wisdom and knowledge; the divine nature, though united to the humanity, did not communicate to it all that it was capable of receiving. This communication was the proper work of the Spirit, according to the order in the operations of the Trinity. Hence his human soul knew not the time of the day of judgment, though as God he did. If his divine nature had advanced his rational faculties, it had also stocked him with full comforts, without the mission of an angel to refresh him in the *garden*, *Luke 22. 43*; and why did it not also advance the vegetative power to rear up his body to a full stature?

This elevation was the work of the Spirit. It was necessary he should be thus furnished, in regard of the *greatness* of his task. Gifts are imparted to men suitable to the places wherein they stand for action, and according to the largeness of the vessel. Christ's place was higher, his work harder than any crea-

tures, therefore required a greater measure of gifts than all creatures in heaven and earth put together. Though he was mighty in his person, and fit to have help laid upon him for us, yet he was to be anointed with the *holy oil*, *Psal.* 89. 19, 20; without this fulness of grace the human nature could never have arrived to the perfection of the great undertaking, but would have sunk in the midst of the work.

It was also necessary he should be thus qualified, as he was to be a *pattern*, as well as the prince of believers: a pattern ought to be the perfectest in the kind. Christ was to be set up as a pattern for believers, both of the Spirit's operation in him, and of their imitation of him. Those who draw pictures look upon the original, that they may work them into a likeness to it. The Spirit of God in the fashioning souls, is to *conform them to the image of Christ*, *Rom.* 8. 29. It was fit that the pattern of all the heirs of heaven, should be fully exact to the pleasure of God. It being God's end to bestow more upon the creature in this redemption, than he did upon it by creation, and that in a more suitable manner; there was as much need of an infinite fitness in the person that was to prepare the way for those communications in an honourable manner to God, and everlastingly comfortable to the creature.

(5.) The Father was the *principal cause* of this furniture. It was God that *anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost*, *Acts* 10. 38. And God gives the Spirit, *not by measure to him*, *John* 3. 34. It is rendered as a reason why, he that God hath *sent speaks the words of God*. This the Father did out of the infinite affection he bore his Son for this work of mediation. *The Father loves the Son, and hath given all things into his hand*, ver. 35. The power he had conferred upon him, *giving all things into his hand*, did require a fulness of the Spirit to manage that power also, that he might be a person fit to be *believed on*, and confided in, ver. 36. All this was that he

might do the Father's will, speak his words, perform his command of love in the repair of his creature. The Lord anointed him, *Isa.* 61. 1, and as a God in covenant with him. God, even thy God, *Heb.* 1. 9, according to the promise made to him; and with an oil of gladness, a joyful oil, as that which is a pleasure to the Father, makes the countenance of Christ cheerful, as the Psalmist speaks of oil in another case, and joyful to the church; because upon this fitness depends its happiness and salvation, its reconciliation, and all the fruits of it. And if *δια τούτου* therefore, notes to us the final cause, or end of this anointing, viz. that he might love righteousness and hate iniquity; it acquaints us, that the end of this unction was to fit him for this work of redemption with a perfect holiness, without which, he could not have restored God's honour, nor appeased his wrath, nor consequently reduced the creature to terms of amity with God. This putting his Spirit upon him, was a fruit of that delight God had in him as his servant; *My servant in whom my soul delights, I have put my Spirit upon him, Isa.* 42. 1. Which delight is also testified, when the Spirit did visibly descend upon him, that he was his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased, *Matt.* 3. 16, 17.

The gifts and graces he was endowed with by this Spirit the Father had given him, were

1. *Habitual holiness.* He was infinitely holy in regard of his Deity; holy by the hypostatical union in his humanity; holy by the residence of the Spirit: a greater holiness than man in innocence, or angels in heaven have; the giving the Spirit not by measure to him, implies a greater holiness, as well as other abilities in the human nature, than all the angels in heaven ever had, who have the Spirit by measure. The holiness therefore of Christ's person incomparably exceeds all the holiness of the angelical nature which hath a limited communication of the Spirit. As the Apostle argues for his deity, *Unto which of the angels*

said he at any time, *thou art my Son*, Heb. 1. 5. So to which of the angels did he at any time give the Spirit not by measure? Though he took upon him the form of a servant, yet he was a righteous servant. There was no original sin in his conception, nor actual sin in his conversation; he was *separate from sinners* in the manner of his birth, and in the actions of his life; he had a purity of nature, and a purity of life commensurate to the law, that he might be our *paschal lamb* without blemish; he was holy in the account of angels, Luke 1. 35; holy in the account of devils, *The Holy One of God*, Mark 1. 24. holy in the account of his Father, *He always did those things which pleased him*, John 8. 29.

(1.) This was necessary for his office. *It became him and us as our High Priest, to be undefiled*, Heb. 7. 26. As it was necessary he should suffer for the satisfaction of God's justice; so it was necessary he should by a purity be fit for so great a task; as reasonable creatures we owe a perfect obedience, as rebellious creatures, an eternal punishment; there must therefore be an holiness commensurate to the precepts of the law, as well as a passion commensurate to the curses of the law. Upon this holiness of his is our reconciliation grounded. *For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. 5. 21. Had he known experimentally the least spot, he could not by his sacrifice have been made the righteousness of God to us; for not only as his servant, but as his *righteous servant*, he was to *justify many*, Isa. 53. 11; hereby he was able to *appear to take away our sins*, and did do it, *because in him there was no sin*, 1 John 3. 5. The apostle rendering the latter as the reason of the former, had he had the least speck, he could not have been a Mediator, because he had then been a party in being a sinner; his office could not have been performed, which was to make up the breach, not to make a new one; he had rather polluted than purified us, and

fastened our sins, rather than took them away. What could he have offered, if he had not had flesh and blood? How could he have offered acceptably, if there had been any spot upon him in his appearance before the holy justice of his Father? *Heb.* 9. 14. He had then been a rebel, a prisoner, and had forfeited all that might have been a ransom for us. How could he have made peace with God for us, when by reason of a blemish, he could not make peace in his own conscience? An inevitable destruction had been brought upon mankind, which could not have been repaired. His intercession kept up the world from sinking, when Adam fell; but whose mediation should have preserved the world, had this Mediator failed, since God had no other Son to employ in so great an affair?

(2.) It was necessary in regard of his *dignity*. The Deity, because of infinite holiness, could not have dwelt in a tainted humanity. * Though this habitual grace be given by God, yet it is a connatural property of Christ, god-man; because by the dignity of his person it was due to him. It had been a prodigious and preternatural thing, to unite the human nature without the ornaments of grace to the divine, as it had been, if the body of Christ had not, by reason of the hypostatical union, been made immortal and glorious; though those properties of the body do not flow from the union by any physical resultance; for to the humanity, by this union, there is only communicated *esse personale*, not *essentiale divine nature*, the personal, not the essential being of the divine nature; and therefore divine operations of grace do not physically follow this union, but as they are due to that nature so united. Had they followed physically this union, the body of Christ could not have been weary, hungry, and subject to the infirmities of our flesh. In regard of the dignity of his person, this holiness was due to

* Suarez. in Part. 3. Aquin. Tom. 1. Disp. 18. § 3. p. 367.

him; without it, it had been the greatest disparagement to God to send him, and the greatest prejudice to us; for had there been any spot, the person of Christ had been said to sin, as well as the person of Christ is said to suffer. Since the Father had placed his delight in him, and had promised to uphold him, it could not be that that should enter upon him, which was so contrary to the perpetual delight God had promised to fix in him.

This was the act of the Father, and ascribed to him, *Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world?* John 10. 36. Some understand it of the sanctification of Christ by eternal generation, receiving by that holiness, *per essentiam*, by essence; others by sanctification understand only a separation of him, to his office. But it rather seems to be meant of the preparations for the exercise of his office, sanctification and mission being joined together; the Father separated him, and anointed him with the Spirit, who as *the Spirit of the fear of the Lord* resting upon him, Isa. 11. 2, was the immediate inspirer of him with this internal holiness.

2. With *wisdom and knowledge*. As God, he had an increated knowledge; but this could not be communicated to his humanity, because a creature is not capable of any thing infinite: and though he was filled with all gifts from his conception, ὑποστατικῶς, personally, yet it does not follow from thence, that the soul of Christ should know every thing, because this did not belong to the property of that nature. And though he was the head of angels, it will not follow that he should know, as man, what the angels knew; for then he had not stood in need of an angel to strengthen him. And if he were made lower than the angels, it was no disparagement to him, as being in the form of a servant, to be ignorant in some things which the angels knew, which he implies he was, in that speech concerning his ignorance of the day of

judgment; *Of that day and hour knows no man, no not the angels of heaven, Matt. 24. 36.*

But there was no privative ignorance in Christ, but a negative, which is not sinful, and this kind of ignorance was no more disparagement to Christ, than it was, that his soul which was the soul of God, as well as his blood, the blood of God, should be sad to death. But the wisdom he was filled with, was the wisdom pertaining to his office of Mediator: as he was to reprove and convince, and smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; *The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, Isa. 11. 2, 3, 4*; he had wisdom, i. e. a right judgment of things pertaining to his office, judging of things according to the divine will: counsel and prudence, in the direction of his actions: knowledge of all accidents and circumstances which might occur to hinder him from the accomplishment of his work: and might to effect all: which gifts were bestowed upon him by the Spirit. All which gifts ended in this of the fear of the Lord; a reverence and observance of his Father, as superior to him in this work of mediation. And therefore it is repeated again, *shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, ver. 3*, an observance of the will of God in that work committed to him. All the gifts he had, were to run into this ocean of faithfulness to God.

The fear of the Lord in Christ was a reverence of the divine Majesty, and the divine command; not a fear of separation from the Father by any sin, or a fear of punishment by him for any sin, because he could not sin. Without a reverence of God, he had not been faithful; without wisdom and knowledge, he had not been able. Ignorance could never have managed his work, unfaithfulness could never have accomplished it: the one had made him incapable to attempt it, the other to perfect it; the one had stripped him of all capacity for it, the other of all suc-

cessfulness in it. The knowledge of the will of God was that whereby he was *mighty to help**. He had counsel to direct, as well as power to effect: he had the gift of wisdom to manage his power, to the defeating of his enemies. This was necessary; the human nature had been defective in that which it was designed for, unless it had understood what was fit to be done in order to it. It had not consisted with the wisdom of God, to send one about so great a work, who did not understand the nature of it, who was not fully instructed how to manage it. This was necessary as well as holiness; without knowledge he could not have been a reasonable and voluntary sacrifice; all voluntary acts being to be founded in reason; and without holiness concurring with it, he could not have been an acceptable sacrifice.

This wisdom fitted him to sprinkle many nations, *My servant shall deal prudently, he shall be extolled, and be very high, so shall he sprinkle many nations, Isa. 52. 13, 15, יִשְׁכַּל*, some translate prosper, it signifies both; when any one prospers, it is commonly ascribed to his own prudence and wise management of things. He shall understand what is due to God for the reparation of his honour, what is necessary for men for the relieving their necessities, and so purify many by the blood of his sacrifice. Now this wisdom, and the increase of it, was from the strength of the Spirit in him, and the *grace* of God upon him, *Luke 2. 40*. There were constant revelations to him, of what was fit to be done by him in the exercise of his office, according as the Father pleased by his Spirit to communicate himself to his humanity.

3. The Spirit was given him to fit him with a *tenderness to man*, and to lead him out to those exercises, whereby he might *be sensible of the indigencies of man*. He had not only the law of redeeming love in his head, whereby he had a knowledge of his office; but in his heart, whereby he was fitted for a tender exe-

* Psal. 89. 19. Targum, one mighty in the law.

cution of that office, *Thy law is within my heart, Psa. 40. 8.* ¹²⁵ bowels. The Spirit therefore descended upon him in the likeness of a dove, an emblem of meekness and tenderness. And the apostle Peter, *Acts 10, 3*, intimates that the intendment of this unction of him, was to fit him for a compassionate converse with man; *God anointed Jesus with the Holy Ghost, who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil.* He had a tenderness as God, and his humanity is fitted with a tenderness to keep pace with that of the Deity as much as was possible, that the tenderness of both natures might be joined together in one person.

And when this Spirit visibly settled on him after his baptism, he led him presently to an exercise whereby he might feel the miseries of man, and from an experience of them be affected with more tenderness towards him; *Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil, Matt. 4. 1.* Then; When? as soon as ever he had the Spirit, as a dove lighting upon him; and had heard those encouraging words, *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, Matt. 3. 16, 17.* He was led by this Spirit to be tempted by the evil one, that he might in his humanity be acquainted with the craft and subtlety of that adversary which had overturned the world, brought all the dishonour upon his Father, and sunk mankind into their present misery: that he might know the enemy which was threatened in the promise of his incarnation, and experience the subtleties of that serpent which had wrought all those mischiefs he came to redress; and so, as he was to be *acquainted with grief, Isa. 53. 3*, he might understand the first author of that which occasioned this grief to him. It was by this grace of meekness and humility, he was especially fitted to be a *second Adam* to redeem us, because pride was the sin of the first Adam to destroy us: who because he would become as high as God who created him, the Redeemer

would become lower than man that was created by him ; yea, *a worm and no man*, *Psa.* 22. 6. So excellently did the Spirit fit him with an humility proportionable to his undertaking.

4. The Spirit was given to him by his Father, to enable him with a *mighty power to go through this undertaking*. He had a *Spirit of might*, executive of his wisdom and counsel, *Isa.* 11. 2, a courage to attempt the most daring difficulties, and endure the fiercest calamities. A power to suffer for the satisfaction of justice, a power to relieve the pressures of our wants, a power to conquer his and our enemies. When he was anointed by God with the Holy Ghost, he was anointed *with power*, *Acts* 10. 38, *ἐνταμεν* not *ἐξουσία*, for the exercise of his office, and the doing good. The design of putting the Spirit upon him, was that he might *bring forth judgment to the Gentiles* ; for that immediately follows the promise of the Spirit to him, *Isa.* 42. 1. This was his encouragement actually to engage in the exercise of every part of his office ; *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach glad tidings to the meek, &c.* *Isa.* 60. 1.

The Spirit was upon him in all the acts of his mediation, the Spirit therefore did continually assist him in every exercise ; he was not left alone, but *he that sent him was with him*, *John* 8. 29. The Father was with him by his Spirit ; the Father had promised his assistance : now assisting grace is the work of the Holy Ghost. His grace was fed and actuated by the Spirit, and brought forth into exercise. The Spirit led him into temptation ; what ? only to lead him to the conflict, and desert him in it ? No surely, but to actuate those graces, wherewith he had filled him, against the tempter ; *God was with him*, *Acts* 10. 38. Assisting, exciting, actuating him. And the Spirit did assist him, and excite the graces in him to the very last gasp ; for *through the Spirit he offered up himself*, *Heb.* 9. 14. Through the virtue of this

Spirit, sanctifying his human nature, gifting him with strength and wisdom; exciting those eminent graces upon the cross, wherewith he had filled him at his conception; and supporting him with his power, while the Father was bruising him.

As he lived in this holiness of the spirit, so he died and offered up himself through the strength of it, without spot to God. *Through the Spirit*, signifies the strength and power of the Spirit, as when we are said to *mortify the deeds of the body through the Spirit*, Rom. 8. 13. i. e. through the powerful operation of the Spirit. For as the highest graces of Christ, faith, love, and obedience, were to be exercised upon the cross, so the assistance of the Spirit was necessary, to the exciting and actuating those graces: for acts of grace being supernatural, a suitable concurrence is necessary for the exerting those acts; and this concurrence is truly the exciting and assisting grace of the Spirit. The natural powers of the humanity cannot otherwise be helped by the word, but as the *λογος* or *word*, flows in upon it to actuate those powers of the soul. But this influx and motion is common to the Trinity, and therefore is not from the divine nature, as hypostatically united, but from God as the first cause, and from the Spirit as a person whose office it is to excite grace, and assist it in the exercise.

Not that the Spirit so possessed Christ, as that he did not exercise his own faculties in his whole office: but as the Spirit is said to pray *in us*, Rom. 8. 26, and we said to pray *in him*, Jude 20. The Spirit quickens our faculties, and by his inspiration excites and assists the act. The Spirit did all along enable Christ with a mighty power: it did first unite his soul to his body, his divine nature to the human, strengthened him in his temptation, stood by him in his passion, and at last united his body to his soul at his resurrection. *Quickened by the Spirit*, 1 Pet. 3. 18. *Declared to be the Son of God, with power, according*

to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, *Rom. 1. 14*; showing himself here in the whole administration, a spirit of holiness, in his conception, conversation, oblation, justification, and resurrection. Upon which account he is said to be *justified in the Spirit* in the administration and ordering of the church. For it was *through the Holy Ghost he gave commandments to the apostles whom he had chosen, Acts 1. 2*, not leaving his human nature till it was made immortal and glorious in heaven; that thereby the redemption and reconciliation might be every way complete. It was to those ends and purposes God gave the Spirit not by measure to him.

5. The Spirit was given to him by his Father, not only to fit him for his *mediatory undertaking*, but thereby to accomplish *all the fruits of reconciliation in his seed*, as God prepared him a body to lay down as a ransom for us, *Mat. 20. 28*, so he gave him the Spirit, to bestow as a largess on us: he was given to him, to be derived from him, as from the fountain, to all believers; whence they are said to be *his fellows, Heb. 1. 9*. As he made himself their fellow, by descending to the fellowship of their nature; so they were to be his fellows, by the communications of his Spirit. All men are his fellows in regard of his partaking of human nature, but believers only are his fellows in regard of conformity to the image of God. There is a fulness of merit in him resident in heaven, as a sweet-smelling savour before God; and a fulness of grace to distil upon his seed to make them acceptable to God: merit to keep up the amity on his Father's part, and grace to keep up the amity on the believer's part. The graces of the Spirit were given to him, not only as Mediator, without which the human nature had not been capable for the work; but as a *head*, which redound from him upon *his members, Col. 2. 19*, and convey nourishment to every part.

As God assembled light in the sun, to fit it for a

full fountain of light, to transmit from heaven to the creatures on earth motion, warmth, and influences, whereby the qualities in all bodies are preserved and excited; so hath God given the Spirit to Christ, the Sun of righteousness, and stored him with grace and holiness, as a common *fountain of gardens*, a public head, for the quickening, beautifying, and enriching believers. Without this fulness of light, the sun could not be beneficial to the world, nor answer the end of its creation; so without this fulness of spirit in Christ, he could not accomplish the fruits and ends of the reconciliation he hath made. And therefore though the Spirit sanctified Adam in innocence, as the third person in the Trinity, and so he breathed an holiness upon Christ, yet he sanctifies believers now in a new habitude, not only as the third person in the Trinity, but *as the Spirit of Christ* the Mediator, sent in his name by the Father, as purchased by Christ; upon which account he is called the Spirit of Christ, and Christ is said to *send him*, *John 16. 7*, because as Mediator, he acquired a right by the merit of his sufferings, to dispense this fulness of the Spirit, who now acts as a fruit of Christ's intercession, upon believers. *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter, John 14. 16.*

Use of this part.

First. How *gross a sin is unbelief*, which practically denies the ability of that Saviour, which the Father so richly fitted by his Spirit to the work of reconciliation? It is a charge and imputation upon God, as though he did not furnish him with sufficient abilities. It is a denying his divinity or humanity, or both. It is all the heresies that ever were started against the person of the Son of God in the mass; they are all practically bundled up in this one single sin. God's anger will most flame, when that which cost him the greatest treasures is despised. It is the despising all that is great in God; his riches, his power, his honour. His riches in furnishing him, his power in

supporting him, his honour designed by him in both. It is a more sensible contradiction to the Trinity, than any sin against the light of nature, because there is a more evident discovery of the Trinity in his mediation, the Father appointing, calling, counselling, ordering; the Spirit furnishing, fitting, exciting, supporting; the Son, acting as the subject of all this. It does not affront a man, nor an angel, no nor only the Son of God himself, but the magnificence of the Father towards him, and the pains of the Spirit on him.

2. How should we be *encouraged to faith* in this able Saviour? Since he hath all the fitness that could delight God, and all the fulness whereby he can pleasure man: he is every way able to satisfy God and save the believer. His ability being so much and so great upon the earth, is not diminished in heaven, no more than his compassions are abated. As he learned a new mode of compassionating men, before his departure out of the world; so since his ascension to heaven, he hath received a greater power of assisting men. Before he had the Spirit to gift himself, now he hath the Spirit to send upon his people. He hath a fulness of grace, a fitness of gifts, that he may be every way able to help. He had a body to bear our sins, and a divine nature whereby to expiate them; his merit was as infinite as his person. He is an holy high priest, not tainted with any of those evils which he was to expiate in others.

He is not only man; then he might have fallen as the *first Adam* did, and left us in the same, or a worse condition than before. He is not only God; then he could have performed no obedience to the law, as being not concerned in it as a subject, but as the law-giver, nor could he have offered any satisfaction to God, as being incapable of suffering in the deity. But God and man, fit to repair the honour of God, and the fallen state of the creature. He had an enlarged understanding to know his work, inconceivable power

to perform it, and incomparable goodness to be faithful in it. Such wisdom as he was furnished with could not be ignorant of his office, nor is to this day ; such power could not be weak, nor will ever languish ; such integrity could not be false, nor will ever deceive the comers to him.

3. *Admire* these infinite compassions of God. O marvellous grace ! That Christ should be endued with the richest grace by his Father to relieve our poverty ; with the highest might, to help our weakness ; with a powerful assistance to conquer our enemies ; with an overflowing fulness, to fill up our emptiness ; and abundant grace poured into his lips, to comfort our dejectedness. God cannot show greater love, than to send his Son to make the peace ; and unlock his cabinet, wherewith to furnish him. An old frame of thankfulness will not fit an evangelical discovery of love, when God tells them of *his servant in whom his soul delights*, and upon whom he had put his Spirit for the redemption of man, then he makes this use of exhortation of it, *sing unto the Lord a new song*, new love, calls for new praise. God might have destroyed us with less cost ; than he hath reconciled us, for our destruction there was no need of his counsel, nor of fitting out his Son, nor opening his treasures ; a word would have done it, whereas our reconciliation stood him in much charge. It was at the expence of his grace and Spirit, to furnish his eternal Son to be a sacrifice for our atonement. An inexpressible wonder that the Father should prepare his Son a mortal body, that our souls might be prepared for an incorruptible glory.

PART VII.

THE COMMISSION OF JESUS TO HIS WORK.

His whole work was prescribed him—He received instructions for his work—His commission was confirmed by his miracles—The redemption of men was the design of his commission—The Father actually sends him—To be acknowledged as the sent of God—The use of these considerations—Jesus was actually bruised by the Father—This was necessary as to what he was to suffer—And the attributes to be glorified—His justice—His holiness—His love.

5. **GOD** commissioned Christ to this work of reconciliation. He gave him a fulness of authority, as well as a fulness of ability. He is therefore said to be sealed, as having his commission under the *great seal of heaven*, *John 6.27.** Sealing notes a special designment of the thing sealed to some special purpose: so the sealing of Christ signifies his separation and authority to exercise his offices; and in particular, of giving meat to the world, which should endure to *everlasting life*. By virtue of this commission, whatsoever Christ does is valid; for he does it as God's attorney, to whom he hath transferred a power to carry on the work of redemption; in which respect he is called God's ser-

* Τετον γαρ ὁ πατήρ ἐσφράγισεν ὁ θεός.

vant, not by nature, but a servant by office. In this respect he is said to be *anointed*, *Isa.* 61. 1. Anointing was not so much the fitting a person, as a declaration of his fitness, and an authorizing him to an exercise of his offices. Anointing under the law, signified an authority conferred upon a person for government, priesthood, or prophecy. In that place Christ doth distinguish his commission from his fitness, and declares himself fit, because he was commissioned; *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me*, there is his fitness, *because y^e therefore the Lord hath anointed me.*

It was not agreeable to the divine wisdom, to commission any for an office, but whom he had furnished with an ability for that office. What was he commissioned for? not to thunder the law, but to declare the gospel, the gospel of peace to the broken hearted, to reveal the thoughts of amity which his Father had. Upon this account Christ tells us, he did not *come of himself*, *John* 7. 28, and in regard of this commission he is called God's angel; *Mal.* 3. 1, messenger, the word signifies an angel; the *apostle of our profession*, *Heb.* 3. 1, because as he authorized and sent the apostles, so the Father authorized and sent him a messenger, and an interpreter, *Job* 33. 23. Though this commission was given him at his birth, yet God renewed the declaration of it several times. At his baptism, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, *Mat.* 3. 17. At his transfiguration, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him*, *Mat.* 17. 5. Christ pleads this commission, as well as the covenant between them, *I have finished the work thou gavest me to do*, *John* 17. 4, when he calls it a *work given him to do*; what work I have done, was appointed me, and I have done it by thy authority; and therefore our redemption and security in it, depends primarily upon the covenant or fœderal transaction between the Father and the Son; and next, upon the commission given to Christ, which was indeed but the

performance of the first articles on the Father's part.

Christ's commission was declared several ways ; by the miracles he wrought by his own hand, as well as by the apostles ; by the holiness of his life ; by the accomplishment of all the predictions of the prophets in his person ; by his resurrection from the dead, and by the conversion of the world, executed in the most astonishing and divine manner. This commission he had at once as well as his fitness ; but he did successively enter into the exercise of his offices ; at first he performed his prophetic, then exercised his priestly, a little before his death, at his authoritative prayer, *John* 17, where he begins his intercession, the greatest, choicest, and most durable part of his priesthood. His kingly, he exercised more especially after his resurrection, in the orders he settled for the church ; all power was then more manifestly declared to be given him.

He had then in the whole, the stamp of all God's authority upon him.

(1.) His *whole work* was prescribed him ; which is expressed by the notion of a precept, as he was God's servant. The command of a superior is a sufficient commission to a servant, to do a work he is ordered to perform ; and Christ, in regard of his mediatory office, was inferior to his *Father*, *John* 14. 28. In which respect the Father is said to be *greater* than he : the command was his commission from God, but miracles were the manifestation of that commission to man. This command implies not any unwillingness in Christ to undertake and perform this work ; (as though God were necessitated to bend his will thereunto, and to force him by virtue of his obedience to it ;) but it is rather a law or rule of his acting voluntarily, agreed upon between the Father and the Son ; and as heartily embraced by Christ, as it was kindly enacted by God for the good of man.

In regard of this particular order, his whole me-

mediatory management in the world is called *obedience*. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, *Phil.* 2. 8. Obedient to death, even to the utmost and sharpest point, which infers an extension of the command on God's part, and obedience on Christ's part in all things preceding the cross, and all the circumstances of his reconciling death; doing nothing in his whole state of humiliation, but in obedience to his Father's injunctions: which injunctions were so particular, that there is no material thing in the whole life and death of Christ upon record in the new testament, but is expressed in the mysteries of the law, or the oracles of the prophets in the old. He did nothing either as man, or as Mediator, but according to God's order: as he was man, he was observant of the moral law, as being that covenant of works he was to make up the breach of, which he performed in the highest manner upon the cross, manifesting his love to God in laying down his life according to his order, and love to man in giving his life for a ransom for him: and by an act of charity incumbent upon him by the moral law, praying for his persecutors.

As he was born under the Jewish administration, he observed God's orders in that; in circumcision, as a fœderal rite, which he suffered in his flesh; and the passover, a commemoration of a national deliverance, which he celebrated with his disciples; but not in purifications and sacrifices, which were appointed for atonement, and implied sin in the offerer, which it was not congruous for him to be subject to, by reason of the exact purity of his person: but above all, he was an exact observer of the mediatory law; which was a law added over and above to him in that economy, and incumbent upon none else, neither angels nor men. In this he did nothing, but by order; he did *nothing of himself, but what he saw the Father do*, *John* 5. 19; i. e. what he had directions from his Father to perform; for if you understand it

of Christ as Mediator, he did many things which the Father did not do, but nothing but what the Father did order him to do.

And therefore whatsoever Christ did was manifested to him by the Father; *For the Father loves the Son, and shows him all things that himself doeth, &c.* ver. 20: and he had no respect to his own will, did nothing of his own will, did nothing of his own head, but observed exactly the pattern set him by the will of his Father. *I can of my ownself do nothing, I seek not my own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me,* ver. 30. As he was sent by his Father's order, so he was altogether guided by his Father's will, wherewith his own will exactly concurred. Therefore those good works he had done, were showed them from his Father, *John* 10. 32, those *καλα ἔργα*, *those comely works*; all that tenderness he had showed either to soul or body, were wrought by his Father's commission, and his Father's power. In this respect, as he was polished in regard of fitness, so he was a *shaft* in regard of motion, *Isa.* 49. 2, flying swiftly to the mark whereto the archer designed him. And because he had so exactly observed his commission, he did *abide in his Father's love*, which he uses as an incentive to his disciples' obedience, both from his own example, and the issue of it. *John* 15. 10.

(2.) God gave him *instructions* how to manage this. When any wise man intends an end, and fixes upon the best means for it, he orders every circumstance, time, place, manner, as far as he is able. God, intending the mediation and incarnation of Christ, comprehended under that decree, the place, manner, and all the circumstances of it in every *punctilio*. It is so evident that Christ had his instructions from God, that the Socinians fancy an ascension of Christ into heaven after his birth, and before his preaching in the world, to be instructed by God what he should preach; for Paul, say they, ascended into heaven before

he was sent to the Gentiles : and if the servant did, why not the Master ? But this is to argue against the Deity of Christ. It is strange that the scripture which speaks so particularly of the actions of Christ, of what was done before his preaching, viz. his birth and baptism, should be silent in so remarkable an occurrence, and every evangelist be forgetful of it : it is not credible, that if they had known it, they should be silent in it ; but the scripture plainly denies this pretended ascension ; *He entered once into the holy place, Heb. 9. 12, 24.*

In regard of this instruction, God is said to call Christ to his *foot*, *Isa. 41. 2, i. e. taught him* : as scholars used to sit at their master's feet ; *Who raised up the righteous man from the east, צדק righteousness.* Some understand it of Abraham, some of Cyrus, both which were raised from the east ; but the following expressions are too high to suit either of them. God brought him as the sun from the east, to shine upon a dark and blind world. *His work* is in this respect said to be *before him, Isa. 62. 11*, as having his instructions copied out to him ; as ambassadors receive instructions from the prince. His doctrine is therefore said not to be so much his, as his Father's, *John 17. 16* ; it is a transcript of his Father's mind and will : *I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart, I have declared thy faithfulness, and thy salvation, I have not concealed thy loving-kindness and thy truth, Psal. 40. 9, 10* ; wherein Christ is represented speaking to his Father, and giving an account how he had observed his rule, and how faithful he had been in the declarations of his will ; how emphatical is he in referring all to God, *thy righteousness, thy faithfulness, thy salvation, thy loving kindness, thy truth.* Whatsoever Christ spake, he heard from the Father ; not only as a Son by eternal generation, but as a Mediator by an authoritative instruction, he spake to the world those things which he had *heard of the Father, John 8. 26*, and every tittle of

his instructions was observed, *John* 15. 15 ; he had communicated all things which he had heard of his Father, and whatsoever he did communicate, was revealed to him by his Father. This declaration, which was the chief part of his instructions, was of the *name* of God, which he pleads he had *declared*, *John* 17. 6, 26, the name of grace and love which is expressed, *Exod.* 34, his reconciling name.

The *name* of God is said to be in *him*, *Exod.* 23. 21. My name, i. e. my law and doctrine, as in some places the law of Christ is expounded, his law, *Isa.* 42. 4, which is rendered *his name*, *Mat.* 12. 21. This was promised: *I will raise them up a prophet, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him*, *Deut.* 18. 18, 19. They were God's words in his mouth ; God's words which he should speak in God's name. God gave him authority to reveal his will, and commanded men to hear him, if they had any mind to eternal happiness. You have the full instructions of the work he was to do, and the words he was to speak, *Isa.* 49. 8, 9, after the covenant made with him, he was to establish the tottering earth which was shaken and disordered by sin ; he was to be an herald to proclaim pardon and liberty in favour to the prisoners bound in chains of guilt. God instructs him what he should say ; *That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth to them that are in darkness, shew yourselves ; come out of your dungeon, you that are sold under the power of sin, shew yourselves, appear before God as a reconciled Father ; for I am the covenant of the people, and God's salvation to the ends of the earth.*

(3.) *Miracles* performed by him, were a *confirmation* of the *authenticity* of his commission. They were miracles of that nature that had not been performed by any prophet before him. The opening the eyes of one that was born blind, was an act unheard of in the world ; and the raising one that had lain

some days putrifying in his grave, was not to be paralleled by any of the ancient prophets. And those miracles done by him, which were of the same kind with those done by the prophets of old, were done with more ease, and in a way of absolute authority. These were such credentials, that not only *Nicodemus* acknowledged him upon that account, to be a *teacher sent from God*, *John* 3. 2; but the devils knew him to be the *Messiah, the Son of God*, *Luke* 4. 41. The casting out devils was an unanswerable argument of his authority; since those malicious spirits were too strong to be subject to a created power, or obey his command, without a touch of omnipotence to compel them to it; these he dispossessed with authority, as one that had power over them; whence the people began to admire the *excellency of his doctrine*, *Mark* 1. 27, because accompanied with such triumphant seals. Without a divine commission to fortify his command, his word had been as ridiculous to them, as they were malicious against him: the end of all those miracles wrought by him, was to testify God's approbation and mission of him. *Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you*, *Acts* 2. 22, ἀποδείκνυμενον. They were demonstrations of his commission, and are called signs which God did by him, as they are called also the *works of his Father*, *John* 5. 36, which bore witness of him that the Father had sent him, and challenged from the Jews a belief of him; and he intimates that their unbelief had been excusable, if he had not done *such works*, *John* 10. 37.

These miracles were an evident testimony that the Father was in him, because exceeding the sphere of natural causes, they were products of the creative power, which is ascribed in scripture principally to the Father; and therefore more unanswerable than an audible voice from heaven, which had been more lia-

ble to evasions and objections, than ocular demonstrations allowed by the common sense of all spectators, and felt by the subject who received the benefit of them. These being acts of omnipotence, could not be affixed to a falsity. For it would follow, that either God were deceived himself, which he cannot be, because of his omniscience, or that he would deceive others, which is impossible, because of his truth. And especially when he was solemnly desired to assist him with his omnipotence in the raising *Lazarus* to this end, that *they might believe that he had sent him, John 11. 42*, which he durst never have desired, nor would God ever have granted, had he only pretended an authority; for then he had settled the faith of man upon a false foundation, in overpowering their reason by a supernatural work, to assent to those things which they could not have been induced unto by lower arguments. These were the seals of his patent from heaven; whence when *John* sent his disciples to know of him, whether he were the Messiah, he gives no other demonstration, than that of the supernatural works he had wrought.

(4.) The *end* of this commission was the reconciliation and redemption of man, by making *satisfaction* for our sins; *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God, and our Father, Gal. 1. 4*. It was the will of God, and our Father, that he should give himself for our sins, wherein God acted not only as a just Judge to have the honour of his law maintained, nor only as a sovereign Lord, to reduce the creature to obedience; but as a tender Father; out of a paternal affection to restore the creature to happiness; *according to the will of God, and our Father*. The apostle lays therefore our atonement upon the will of God, whereby Christ was authorised to this work; *By which will we are sanctified. Heb. 10. 10*. By this will of God given in charge, and instructions to Christ,

we are atoned and brought into a state of reconciliation, through the offering of the body of Christ once for all. Hence *ἀποκατασταθῆναι*, a making reconciliation for the sins of the people, is said to be a thing pertaining to God, wherein Christ expressed his faithfulness to the instructions God gave him as *a high priest*, *Heb. 2. 7.*

He was commissioned to *testify* of the love of God. *Ye are my witnesses, and my servants whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour, Isa. 43. 10, 11.* To witness the nature and love of God in the salvation he hath provided, to evidence that he was the only true God, because the only fountain of salvation to the lost world: He had therefore an account of all from his Father, upon whose hearts an impression of this love was to be made, so that he *knew them all by name*, *John 10. 3.* It was to give us an understanding of God, both of his truth and of his *love*, *John 5. 20.*

The design of his commission was to secure our *final* and *perfect* salvation. It was the will of God, not only that he should *give himself for our sins*, but *that he should deliver us from this evil world*; i. e. conduct us to heaven, that we might be for ever there *without spot*, or any stain of the evil of the world upon us, *Gal. 1. 4.* Upon this account he had authority, *ἐξουσίαν*, to give eternal life to as many as God had given him; and it was in his instructions, not to *cast off any that came to him*, *John 6. 38.* Whence the conversion of the Samaritan woman is said to be the *will of his Father*, *John 4. 34*: and there is no work of grace upon any soul by the merit of his passion, and power of the Spirit, but is by an order of his Father to him for it; and therefore when God shall call for all those that, as a right, are deposited in his hands, he expects the full performance of his charge, and *a resignation of them all* to him without the loss of one, *John 6. 39.* For his

commission and instructions extended, not only to take away the enmity on God's part by the satisfaction of his justice, but to present them unblameable and unreprieveable in the sight of God, that there might be no ground for the breaking out of this enmity again on either side. *Col.* 1. 20, 22. Thus was our Saviour made by the authority of God, *a surety of a better testament*, *Heb.* 7. 22; a surety on man's part to satisfy the debts which are owing to the justice of God, which he performed as a priest by his death; and a surety on God's part to secure pardon and peace to believers, that they should be no more under arrest for their debts, which was ensured when all authority and power was given into his hands; so that the commission and instructions were every way extensive for the asserting the honour of God, and ensuring the happiness of the creature.

6. The Father *actually sends him*. Nothing more frequent in the gospel, especially of John, than Christ's affirming he was sent by the Father; *I proceeded forth, and came from God, neither came I of myself, but he sent me*, *John* 8. 42. As he intruded not himself, nor appointed himself, so he did not take his journey, and present himself to the world, till he had his dispatch from God; as he had his divine being by communication from the Father, so he had his temporary mission from his Father. His generation is the proper ground of his mission, *But I know him, for I am from him, and he hath sent me*, *John* 7. 29; though his mission is not the necessary consequent of his eternal generation: his eternal generation did not necessitate his temporal incarnation, no more than the eternal procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son, can necessitate the incarnation of the Spirit. There was in the Father a right of sending propter relationem originis: and because of Christ's voluntary putting himself into the relation of a Mediator. In respect of his being the second person in the Trinity, he is said to be begotten; as Mediator and recon-

ciler, he is said to be sent; generation was an eternal act, mission a temporal; that was natural, this voluntary; the decree of mission was eternal, the act of mission temporal. His being sent, doth not impair his Deity: though sent, he is Jehovah; *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, after the glory he hath sent me, and you shall know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me, Zech. 2. 8, 9.* The person that saith he is sent, is Jehovah, and is sent by Jehovah; and the end of his sending is there expressed, ver. 11. For the conjunction of many nations to the Lord, in that day of his sending and dwelling in the midst of Zion. And when he affirms that he is sent by the Lord; *And now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me, Isa. 48. 16,* he affirms himself to be *the first and the last,* ver. 12, 13. *Whose hand laid the foundation of the earth, and his right hand spanned the heavens,* when he called unto them to *stand up together*: his ancient name was sent, which some think is the signification of the word Shiloh, *Gen. 49. 10,* which they derive from a word which signifies sending; and Moses speaks of him to God by this title; *O my God, send I pray thee by the hand thou wilt send, Exod. 4. 13;* which anciently was understood of the Messiah, because the patriarchs did in difficult things express their desire of the coming of the Messiah, who was to restore and settle all things in a happy state. Moses knew that God would send him to be a Redeemer, and he desires God would send by him. And it is a title appropriated to Christ by *John Baptist; He whom God hath sent, John 3. 34.*

(1.) There is the highest *reason to acknowledge him sent of God.* That there was such a person in the world, is acknowledged by the very enemies to his person, and owned in human stories, as well as divine writ. * Since he professed himself to be sent by God, if he were not sent by him, he had been guilty

* Savaranola Trium. Crucis. lib. 2. cap. 13. p. 134.

of the greatest falsity, and greatest folly in affirming so. Had he been a mere man, and come without any authority, how comes it to pass, that after his death he prevailed against the laws of the nation, the grandeur and valour of the world, the wisdom and eloquence of men, and against the whole world that resisted his doctrine? That he put to flight the powers of hell, silenced their oracles? How should one crucified as a malefactor, be so powerful after his death, to make such impressions upon the minds of men, to change the whole scene of the world; to assist his followers for many years after in the working of miracles? If God would for a time have left such a wickedness (had it been a false assertion) unrevenge'd, yet would he ever have seconded it by his own power, and nonplussed men into a belief of it. Would he have assisted the heralds of this news even against himself, and his own truth and righteousness? Had this been done by human means, it might have been suspected; but a divine wisdom and art appeared in all. It was not by riches, honours, or the promises of worldly greatness, that this doctrine spread itself over the world, and found such harbour in the minds of men; but by promises of an invisible and future happiness, and assurance of present misery, reproach, poverty, prisons, torments, and death; and by these means his followers increased to be a formidable number, against the opposition of the princes and learning of the world, and they were more willing and fond to lay down their lives to seal the truth of the doctrine, that Christ was *sent of God*, than to strike one stroke for the propagation of it, though they wanted not courage for acting, as well as for suffering, had any such commission been granted them. * Now if God doth rule the world justly and righteously, we must believe that Christ was sent by God for those ends he declared in the time of his

* Ibid. cap. p. 172.

life, or we must deny the righteous providence of God, and acknowledge all things to be ordered by chance, or some worse power; we must accuse God of the highest unrighteousness, in bearing witness by a divine power to so great an imposture, whereby millions of souls would be undone, had he not, according to his own declaration, been sent by God.

(2.) God sent him for this end of reconciliation and redemption. He was sent as the *messenger of the covenant*, *Mal. 3. 1*, to declare the peace, as well as to be the peace, *Eph. 2. 14, 17*. The thing itself was so incredible, that an injured God should be desirous of reconciliation, and upon such terms as the death of his Son, that it was as needful to be declared by God, as contrived and acted by God. The objections that might have been made against it, had such strength, that he only who lay in the bosom of the Father, and knew all his eternal counsels, and was the actor of it in his own person, could reveal the thoughts, purposes, and resolves of his Father concerning it from all eternity, *John 1. 18*.

Use 1. We see again here the sad charge against unbelief and disobedience. It is a despising the stamp of all God's authority upon Christ, and tearing his commission: a refusal of one particularly sent, a rejection of the messenger of the covenant, and all the covenant treaties of love and peace. This was the aggravation of the Jews' sin, and is likewise of all the inheritors of that unbelief, to the end of the world; that Christ hath an authoritative commission from his Father, and is not received by the rebels: that he speaks in his *Father's name*, and is *not believed* by the offender, *John 5. 43*. God was in Christ reconciling the world, as a prince in an ambassador; therefore God and his reconciling offer are despised in the refusal of his commission: it is to God the affront is offered, Christ being the representative of God in the highest and most gracious charge, in the tenderest and most indulgent offers, any slight

thoughts of his person, any contempt of his precepts, any disregard of his promises, redounds upon the person authorizing him to those ends. He was *sent to be heard and obeyed*, *Matt. 17. 5*; not to be slighted and despised.

2. Study Christ's commission in the extent of it. Whatsoever Christ doth, he doth it by command and commission from his Father. This will support faith against fears, and hope against despondencies. It will afford us arguments in prayer, when we can open before God the commission he gave to his Son, and back every petition with some clause in it; when we can go to Christ as an officer authorized and instructed, and show him what instructions he had; *To bind up the broken hearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they may be trees of righteousness, Isa. 61. 1, 2, 3.* To bind up the broken-hearted, deliver the captives, open the prisons, change deformity into beauty, and sorrow into joy, a spirit of heaviness into a spirit of praise, a languishing frame into a fruitful growth. All which parts of his commission were *owned by him, Luke 4. 18*, and observed in his actings in the world. The poor woman pleaded with him for mercy, as he was the *Son of David, Matt. 15. 22.* We upon a higher title, as he is the commissioner of God, the apostle of our profession, the messenger of the covenant.

3. Act *faith* much upon it. There is little comfort in all that Christ did and suffered, unless we respect him as one sent. Had he come of his own head, we could not with any confidence plead his merit before God. He is sent as his Father's servant, to do service for his Father and his people. Christ must be respected not only as dying, but as one sent by the Father to such an end. This is the character he gives his disciples faith in his relation to the

Father; *They have believed that thou didst send me, John 17. 8.* It is this commission Christ pleads in his intercession: *Let not them that wait upon thee, O Lord God of Hosts, be ashamed for my sake; Let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel, because for thy sake I have borne reproach, Psa. 60. 6, 7.* It is Christ's passion-prayer. The 9th, 21st, and 22d verses were applied to Christ in the new testament. It was by thy order, and for thy honour, I bore this reproach; let not therefore any believer be ashamed and confounded.

What he desired on earth, he intercedes for in heaven, and upon the same ground; he will not therefore refuse those that come unto God by him; he hath an office in heaven for their reception. You come to one who hath an obligation and order from his Father to receive you, and hath too faithful a disposition, and too compassionate a nature of his own; ever to reject you. It was from the strict observance of his Father's orders, that he did nothing but what was pleasing to God; *I do always those things that please him, John 8. 29,* ἀπεσὺν. Ἀπεσὺν, signifies, some say, an order of a court. Not a work done, not a word spoken, but was agreeable to the tenor of his commission, to the copy of his instructions; *Whosoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak, John 12. 49, 50.* We cannot but please God, by believing one that is so exact, by presenting to him what he is so highly pleased with. The command given him by his Father, was the publishing everlasting life. We should then believingly put in plea God's order. This is a stronger ground of support than the principles of sciences, and fallibility of sense, and the totterings of reason.

4. *Bless God* for his love, and for any work in your hearts. The authorizing Christ is a piece of love, that could never enter into the heart of any man, unless God had revealed it: it is therefore

called a mystery, *Eph. 3. 3.* The apostle could not consider the will of God and our Father in this work, without interrupting his discourse with a doxology; *To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen, Gal. 1. 4, 5.* Bless him for any gracious work in your hearts. It was by the order of his Father, any work was done by him in the world. It is by the same order any work is done by him in your souls. It is *Christ's meat and drink to do his Father's will in both.* Not a person that finds the qualifications of grace in his heart, but may read his name in the commission of the Father to Christ. As the angels rejoiced in the manifestation of the wisdom and power of God, when the new creation was laid in the incarnation of Christ, so should we in the mission of the Son of God; *glory to God, and peace on earth,* are in conjunction in themselves, and should be in our meditations on it.

7. The Father *actually* bruises him. In this act is the corner-stone of our reconciliation laid. He bore from his Father our punishment; the punishment of sense in his agonies in the garden, the punishment of loss in the eclipse upon the cross. In the one, he tasted the terrors of hell; in the other, he felt the bitterness of a temporary clouding of heaven. He was *smitten of God and afflicted, Isa. 53. 4; per-cussum Dei, מכה אלהים.* Men that were extremely afflicted, they regarded as smitten by the immediate hand of God. God indeed both loved and punished him in that act, *John 10. 17;* he loved him as our Redeemer, and bruised him as the surety engaging for our debts. He loved him for the glory he was to gain by him, and punished him for the sins he did legally bear upon himself: he loved him as his servant in whom he would be glorified by the punishment of our sins, and the redemption of our souls.

It is granted on all hands, that God was the supreme cause and author of Christ's sufferings; but

some say, * not the immediate executioner with his own hands. For the phrase in scripture, that God did these or those things, concludes not that he did them with his immediate hand ; but that he was the decreer, disposer, and director of them by his just judgment, in a holy manner to correct the sins of men, or by his wisdom to make trial of his saints ; God using for the executioners men or angels, good or bad, or other inferior creatures, as seems best to his wisdom ; *Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it ? Amos 3. 6.* Where he does not ascribe all evil of punishment to the immediate hand of God, but to the sovereign judgment and power of God, appointing and ordering what should be done.

It is certain, that the grace of God was the cause of his *tasting death*, *Heb. 2. 9.* But it is most likely that the Father did immediately bruise him.

1. It seems *necessary* that the stroke should come *immediately from the Father*. It was necessary in regard of *what* he was to suffer. It was more than a bodily death was due by the first sentence against Adam in case of failure on his part : *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die, Gen. 2. 17,* מות תמות ; All kinds of death, the curse of the law reaches further than the case of the body. If nothing more were due to the sinner but the temporal death of the body, it were a light and tolerable punishment ; an infinite wrath surely was due both to soul and body for transgressing the precepts of an infinite majesty. The soul being principal in sin, must be the principal in suffering. The soul was the agent, the body but the instrument ; the whole nature of man had sinned, and violated the articles of the covenant ; the whole nature of man must therefore answer. The soul in us then being the proper subject of sin, the soul of Christ must be the immediate subject of suffering, otherwise he suffered not the penalty due to

sin. Not one of those murderers, whose hands reeked with the blood of his body, could reach his invisible soul, and stain their hands immediately with the oppression of his Spirit; that was beyond their touch, and was obnoxious only to the Father's stroke. No creature could drop an inward wrath upon his soul.

An infinite justice was wronged, an infinite punishment must be suffered: now none can execute infinite wrath, but an infinite person; what creature's strokes could be sufficient to revenge an infinite offence against an infinite majesty? As every faculty of our souls had been depraved by sin, so must every faculty of the soul be afflicted with sorrow. *The whole world was guilty before God, Rom. 3. 19, ὑπὸ δίκῃ τοῦ θεοῦ,* under the judgment of God: *His wrath abode upon us, John 3. 36. We were by nature children of wrath, Eph. 2. 3.* Christ must endure the wrath due to us: it was more than a common death that he was to taste, and *did taste, Heb. 2. 9, 14, 15.* That death which the devil had the power of, who labours not only for the death of the body, but for that of the soul: that death which men under a sense of guilt feared, which was not a temporal, but an eternal one; men feared not a death in sin, but a death for sin; not so much the death of the body, as that of the soul; such a death which men feared, Christ endured; the penal death of men, not the spiritual death of men; and that in regard of the nature of it, not of the continuance, nor the despairs and moral evils which follow upon it: such sins as the damned are guilty of, are not essential to the nature of punishment, but arise from the inherent unrighteousness of the person; neither is the eternal duration of the punishment essential to its nature, but arises from the finite nature of the suffering creature, which renders a commensurate satisfaction from him impossible. The infinite holiness of Christ's nature was a bar against the sins which are committed by others under that

wrath, and the infinite grandeur and dignity of his person, was a bar against the eternal duration of that punishment. Now such a death is immediately inflicted by the wrath of God : I cannot see, how any creature can inflict that which is infinite.

It was necessary the stroke should come immediately from the Father, in regard of the *attributes* the *Father intended to glorify* in the death of Christ. He acted herein as judge, for the manifestation of his vindictive justice ; as supreme lawgiver, for the vindication of his holiness ; as a governor, for the declaration of his tenderness and kindness towards man ; all which attributes were glorified in the highest strain, by his being an actor in the death of his beloved Son.

(1.) His *justice*. His justice had not been so eminent, if Christ had only suffered the death of the body, without impressions of wrath on his soul ; nor if God had left him to the strokes of others, without striking him himself. This attribute had been manifested upon the highest creature, angels in heaven, man upon the earth ; and upon the account of the latter, had reached both the irrational and inanimate creatures ; there wanted nothing to express it to the utmost, but this of bruising his Son. God designed the utmost *demonstration of this in the death of his Son*, *Rom. 3. 26*. Christ was *set out as a propitiation*, that God *might be just* ; that God might be just, i. e. that he might be known, and declared in the highest manner to be a righteous God ; implying, that all other expressions of it before, had been drawn in fainter colours than what he intended here ; as if he could not have been known to have an impartial justice, without such a way of discovery. He did therefore all in this case, which an exact justice could require : for to neglect what it requires, is an injury to it, as well as to do what it prohibits.

In the creation, he was a God of power and wisdom ; in the law, a God of vengeance, which is

mounted to the highest point in inflicting wrath upon Christ for man's violation of that law. In extraordinary visible judgments by the hand of God, there are clearer notices of his justice, than when the hand of instruments is more sensibly felt in them. *The heavens then declare his righteousness, when the Lord is judge himself, Psal. 50. 6.* Abraham's obedience was more eminent by the laying hands upon his own son Isaac himself, according to God's order; so was God's justice in laying his own hand upon Christ, than if it had been committed merely to instruments. Had our Saviour suffered only a bodily death, with those griefs in his soul which are incident to men barely for the death of the body, he had under all that load of sin which was laid upon him, suffered less than many men have done. There was something therefore of wrath dropped into his soul, which was the act of his Father's bruising of him, for the manifestation of his justice, and giving it an unexceptionable satisfaction.

(2.) His *holiness*. God was now upon the highest discovery of his holiness and hatred of sin. Had this punishment being left only to instruments, he had indeed declared his holiness, but in a fainter degree; his hatred of sin had not been so conspicuous, had he not with his own hands poured out a wrath upon him. His end in sending his Son in the *likeness of sinful flesh*, being to make him a sacrifice to *condemn sin in the flesh*, *Rom. 8. 3*: his shooting his wrath upon him was a more sensible, high, and full condemnation of sin, than if all the devils in hell, and all their subjects and votaries on earth, had been let loose to buffet him; herein he showed, that sin was odious and abominable to him; that it should not be spared, though it were only by imputation upon his Son; and hereby he lays a foundation of a greater awe and reverence of his sanctity, and pure indignation upon the hearts of men. Here was the beauty of his holiness, as well as the exactness of his justice; vindicating the honour

of his law, displaying the purity of his nature by sheathing his sword with indignation in the bowels of sin, while he pierced the heart of his beloved Son. A prince punishing his own son, for some enormous crime, by his own hand, would evidence a greater abhorrence of it, than if he only exposed him to the hands of executioners.

(3.) His *love*. If God's love appeared more in giving up Christ as a sacrifice, than if he had saved the world without the death of his Son, and without any satisfaction, as appears, *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, &c. John 3. 17*; which was a purer strain of love than pardoning sin without a sacrifice; it may also follow, that since God resolved to signalize his love to us, he would have it reach the highest note, and it could not be wrought up to an higher pitch, than the sacrificing of his Son for us with his own hand. If there be such an emphasis of love in sending him, there is a stronger emphasis of love in bruising him. God so loved the world, that he *gave* his only begotten Son; but God so loved the world, that he *bruised* his only begotten Son, declares a richer magnificence of love, and raises it to an height of glory, in showing what he would do for miserable creatures. He magnifies his kindness, demonstrates how much he values and delights in his elect, and gives an undeniable proof of the treasures of love in his heart for them. His earnestness in shooting his arrows into him himself, rather than lose his people, and engraving upon him the marks of his anger, is the highest point his compassion to us could amount unto, and a step beyond the bare offer and mission of him. God would save as a judge, with the evidence of his righteousness; as a lawgiver, in the discovery of his holiness; as a king in the display of his sovereignty; *The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, and the Lord is our King, he will save us, Isa. 33. 22*; and as a Father too with the clearest and dearest affection.

2. God *did* bruise him ; *Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he hath put him to grief : when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands, Isa. 53. 10.* This chapter is the history of the cross, and the epitome of the gospel ; it is Christ's crucifixion in effigy, before he was crucified in his person ; the double state of Christ, of humiliation and exaltation, are here described ; the verse is a prophecy which hath something minatory, and something consolatory. Minatory, *it pleased the Lord to bruise him* ; he speaks of what was future, as if it were passed. Consolatory, *he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days,* and yet, this word refers to something antecedent in ver. 9, he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth ; though he had an unspotted holiness in his nature, an unblameable purity in his life, yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, so he stood in our stead, and represented our persons.

It pleased the Lord. The word signifies not only a bare will, but a will with delight. The word is used to signify God's pleasure in his church, *Isa. 62. 4,* where the word is Hephzibah, my delight is in her ; the same word ; and it is used to express Christ's delight in his saints ; *In whom is all my delight, Psal. 16. 3.* Not only his resolve, but his pleasure, his heart was as much in it as his hands ; the word speaks more than a bare permission. He delighted not simply in the strokes he gave, but in his own essential perfections manifested by those strokes, he delighted not simply in the rod, but in that balsam which was to drop from the end of the rod upon mankind ; he was pleased with every wound, as it was a necessary medium to redemption ; the text intimates it, he was pleased to bruise him, but it was in order to another pleasure that was to prosper in the hands of the bruised person.

To bruise him, he hath put him to grief. The word signifies to pound as in a mortar, whereby the great-

ness of Christ's suffering is expressed. God came armed with his vindictive justice, the sentence of the law in his mouth, and the penalty of the law in his hand ; he appeared as a just governor of the world, with a readiness to exercise his authority for the vindication of his law ; he glittered in his holiness, to right the wronged holiness of his law, and in his justice, to revenge the insolences committed against it. His delight in this, might very well consist with his love to his Son. As a Father he loved him, as a Judge he punished him ; as a Father he loved his person, as a God he loved his own honour. A Son enters into suretyship with his Father for an insolvent debtor, the Father loves his Son, as he is a Father, but demands the debt of him as he is a creditor, and hath the law passed against him as he is a governor ; he did affect him as he stood in relation to himself, and punished him, as he stood in relation to us ; he loved him for his own holiness, and punished him for our sins.

Again, it is no wonder that it is expressed, that the Lord was *pleased* or *delighted* to bruise him, since the bruising Christ was a part of the acceptation of the sacrifice ; as fire descending from heaven to consume any sacrifice presented to God, was a sign of the acceptableness of it to God ; this is supposed to be the sign of the acceptation of Abel's sacrifice. Fire from heaven consumed Abel's sacrifice and not Cain's. Theodosian therefore renders accepted *ἐνεπύρσεν*, and the scripture gives us frequent examples of this way of acceptation ; so it was with *Gideon's offering*, *Judg.* 6, 21 ; and so it was with Aaron's, *Levit.* 9. 24, and with Elijah's, *1 Kings* 18. 38, and with David's, *1 Chron.* 21. 26. God had never kindled the sacrifice, had he not been pleased with it.

When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin. When God was to deal with him in a way of vindictive justice, as he was a sacrifice for us, he would not spare him, nor abate one stroke due to him for our sins ; he would deal with him in the same manner as he

would deal with us, in whose place he stood as a sacrifice ; he did not bruise him as he was his Son, but as he was a sacrifice, and so would not abate any thing of that weight of suffering, which was due by the law and by the demand of justice for our iniquities.

PART VIII.

THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS.

The imputation of sin to him was the act of God—No creature could inflict the sufferings he endured—His agony in the garden—More than a sense of approaching bodily death—The Father delighted to bruise him—The grace he exercised under impressions of divine wrath—His love to man—His obedience—His trust—Cautions upon the subject—The uses to be made of the subject—The Father's acceptance of Christ and his sacrifice—Evidence of this—Prayer answered in the name of Jesus—The Father accepted him with infinite pleasure—How this pleasure is discovered—The blessings which flow from it—Improvement.

THE promissory part follows. *He shall see his seed*, there shall be a succession of generations for the glory of Christ, according to that; *His name shall be continued as long as the sun*, *Psa. 72. 17*; he shall be *childed*, he shall have a generation of children to keep up his name. In the verse you see.—1. The greatness of Christ's sufferings, expressed by bruising. 2. The inflicter of them, the Lord. 3. The reason of them, as he was an offering, a sacrifice for sin. 4. The subject, the Redeemer. 5. The fruit of it, a spiritual seed, with duration.

Doctrine. The greatest punishment inflicted upon Christ, when he stood as a sacrifice for sin, *was not the act of men, but the act of God*. There were sufferings in the body of Christ, as buffeting, spitting, scourging, crucifying; in these, men were the instruments, but the determinate counsel of God preceded. But there were sufferings in his soul which was beyond the reach of men. God himself made the impressions on this; the fire that, as it were, burnt up his Spirit, that made him sweat clods of blood in a cold season, came down from heaven, as the fire did upon the legal altar. He never expressed so great a sorrow under all the calamities he felt in the course of his life, as in the garden; he was sore amazed, and very heavy. *He began to be sore amazed, Mark 44. 33, 34*, as if he had tasted nothing but joy in the time past of his life, and never understood the invasions of any sorrow before: he then began to feel the first impressions of that wrath due to sin, a sudden *consternation* seized upon his faculties. Both words *ἐκθαβεσθαι* and *ἀδμυνεῖν*, signify that his pangs were highly strained: a mere bodily death could not amaze him thus.

He had a divine nature to support his human, against a mere separation of his soul from his body, since the divine nature would be separated from neither, and he knew a few days would re-unite them for ever in a glorious state. Christ did as well fore-know by the promise, the glory that was to follow upon his sufferings, as he did by the precept, the passion he was to undergo. It was the wrath of God, a greater bitterness than any other gall in the cup of death, that the human nature, though supported by the divine, stood looking upon with apprehensions of grief and amazement; he knew the greatness of the punishments due to sin, and the greatness of the passion he was to undergo for sin.

He is called *the Lamb of God*, a Lamb of his own appointing, a Lamb of his own sacrificing, distin-

guished from the paschal lamb by the author and giver, called the Lamb of God, whereas those were the lambs of men. In the constitution of Christ in the office of Mediator, which was God's immediate act, he acted the part of a wise governor; in punishing sin in the person of our surety, thereby satisfying his justice, he acts the part of a just judge. May not the punishment of Christ be immediate by God's own hand, as well as the constitution of Christ was immediate by his own mouth? Isaac was to be the sacrifice, and Abraham the sacrificer; Isaac a child of promise, in whom the seed should be called, ordered to fall by the hand of Abraham the father of many nations. Christ's suffering represented in the one, and God's striking prefigured in the other; God seeming to intimate, that as Abraham was willing to offer up his son at his command with his own hands, so he would offer up his Son as a sacrifice for him, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed.

It is true, the devils were let loose upon him with all the powers of darkness, *Luke 22. 53. John 15. 13*, and upon the cross he combated with *principalities and powers*, because there he *spoiled* them, *Colos. 2. 15*; they bruised his heel by their instruments, and his Father his soul by his wrath. The church of old expected and desired this: *Let thy hand be upon the man, and thy right hand upon the Son of man, &c. Psal. 80. 17.* The psalmist complains of the miserable desolation of the church, for which there was no remedy, but in Christ the man of God's right hand, the man of his love. By the hand being upon a man, is meant punishing, many times in scripture; *Thy hand came upon me, Psal. 38. 3*, i. e. thou didst strike me with a plague. Indeed his Father mixed the cup, would not suffer it to depart from him, though he offered up supplications with strong cries; and God, who as a righteous judge, will not clear the guilty, did sentence him to the drinking the dregs of

it; and it is as righteous an act to inflict the punishment, as to pronounce the sentence. He constituted him Mediator by an act of sovereign mercy, he inflicted the punishment upon him by an act of sovereign justice: he sent him into the world, as the Father who had the power of mission; and bruised him upon the cross, as a judge who had the power of punishing.

1. The imputation of our iniquities to him was *the act of God*. *The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all, Isa. 53. 6; חפניע, accurrere fecit incursu hostili.* He gathered together the debts of men, put them into one sum, and transferred them upon Christ, as to guilt and punishment. He bound our transgression upon the back of his only Son, as Abraham did the wood upon the shoulders of his Isaac. Our sins were laid upon Christ, as the transgressions of the people were laid upon the *head of the scape-goat, Lev. 16. 20, 21, 22*, which was but a type of this imputation to Christ; for their sins were not truly laid upon the goat, it had then been the antitype, not the type. Sins were confessed, gathered together by confession, laid upon the beast which is said to bear them; he, and all that touched him, were accounted unclean.

All our sins were laid upon the head of Christ by God: he it was *made him sin for us who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. 5. 21*: not by inhæson, but imputation. * Not only a sacrifice for sin, but sin itself: the double antithesis in the text intimates, he was made that sin he knew not; he knew the punishment by suffering; but he knew not the guilt by commission and practice; he was made that sin which is opposed to righteousness, and that was sin itself, which must be understood only as to the imputed guilt; for punishment could not have been inflicted on him, unless

* Pollhill on the Decrees, p. 225.

guilt had first been imputed to him : had he not first borne our sins, he could not have been driven into the wilderness of desertion and death.

Upon this is laid the difference of his first and second appearance. *So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them, that look for him, shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation, Heb. 9. 28.* At his first he bore our sins : not personally inherent ; but *legally*, after the substitution of him in our stead ; counted to him as his proper debt, upon which account he *restored what he took not away.* At the second he shall *appear without sin.* His nature was free from sin in his first coming, but not his condition : he had sin as our surety, though none in his person ; it was impossible he could be our surety, without this imputation. Upon the account of this suretyship, God reckoned him a debtor, as *made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, Gal. 4. 4.* That what God in justice might charge upon the bankrupt, he might after this constitution of him under the law, by the same right, charge upon the surety : for this guilt, by the Father's act of imputation, upon his own voluntary submission to take our offending nature, became his ; and therefore what penalty was by the law due from us, was to be paid by him. All punishment supposes a guilt one way or other ; but the Redeemer had no personal guilt, for he had *done no violence, Isa. 53. 10* ; yet it pleased the Lord to *bruise him*, when his soul made itself *an offering for sin*, imputed to him.

This imputation was God's immediate act, and could not be the act of any other, because he was the sole creditor without any partner ; and therefore it is no more reflection upon God immediately to punish him, that it was to transfer our sins upon him, which was an act of God, not possible to be done by any creature. God imputed a world of sins to him, because he undertook for that world God had created by him ; therefore God alone inflicted upon his soul

that punishment, which was principally due for our sins. Since he died for our sins, he died under that hand which was to strike us for them: for God made him sin *for us*, i. e. he handled him, as he would have done those sinners in whose stead he suffered, had he not undertaken for them.

2. His greatest sufferings appear to be *above the power of any creature to inflict*. Was it a contest with any creature that made him desirous to wave that death, which was the main end of his coming?

(1.) How was his soul begirt with the wrath of God, *before* his agony in the garden? What an excess of sorrow do those words signify, *Matt.* 26. 37. *Mark* 14. 33. *εκθαμβησαι, αδημονειν*, *sore-amazed, sorrowful, very heavy*; an inward quaking, an inexpressible amazement. What a deluge fell from heaven upon our ark, of which, that of Noah was a type! How was his soul ground to powder in his agony! How did his soul boil under the fire of wrath, and his blood leak through every pore of the vessel by the extremity of the flame! Must it not be more than a finite breath, that thus melted his soul in the garden? Must it not be stronger than a finite stroke, that wrung out those bitter cries? Was there any visible person to afflict him? Yet his agonies there are thought to have more of hell-fire in them, than his sufferings on the cross; clods of blood dropped from him when there was no visible hand to strike him: inconceivable must be the afflictions of his soul, that could make such dismal commotions in his body, and put the whole instrument out of tune; that should make a dissolution of the parts, and make his heart like melted wax *in the midst of his bowels*, *Psa.* 22. 14. His spotless conscience could not flash such lightnings, as to melt the sword, when nothing touched the scabbard; his Father was then charging him with our sins, actuating his knowledge and sense of them: he had all his lifetime a knowledge of the ingratitude and rebellion of sin; he knew how it had

offended and injured God; how it had deformed and ruined the creature; now was his knowledge actuated, and the charging upon him the punishment of them, made his knowledge sensible and experimental. This cup discovers more bitter ingredients than any creature could wring out into it.

(2.) Could it be *only the sense* of an approaching bodily death, that could so deeply afflict his innocent soul? If so, he had discovered a greater weakness than many of the martyrs: nay, had been outstripped in courage by many moral heathens; his nature sure was as strong as theirs to bear it, had not his sufferings been attended with a more sensible sting than theirs were: Martyrs have suffered as great outward torments with joy, laughing in the faces of their persecutors, and edging their fury to more sharpness. But alas he suffered more deaths than one: *He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, Isa. 53. 9.* במחיר The death of the soul in regard of the bitterness, though not in regard of duration. His Father inflicted what was evil, and withdrew that which was good: were not the clouds of his Father's countenance, and a substraction of good looks from him a bruising him? All the outward torments of the world, could not have drawn one doleful cry from any man under the full and sensible beams of God's favour, much less of Christ. Could all the instruments in hell, earth, or heaven, draw a veil between his soul, and his Father's countenance? This must only be his Father's act, and was a signal stroke.

It is clear there was a negative act of God, denying that comfortable presence which was due to him as a holy person by the covenant of works: and could not be denied his humanity, as united to the second person in the Trinity, had he not been in another capacity upon the cross, and not only precisely as the Son of God. The inflicting of the evil of inward punishment, was sure as much the act of his Father, as the withdrawing from him an inward good, the light of

his countenance. Might there not be more than a bare cloud, might there not be some bitter frowns darted upon him, since he appeared at that time in the condition of the greatest sinner? If the wrath and justice of his Father did not immediately drop upon him, how could he satisfy it; what satisfaction could arise to it, if he were not at all touched by it? The fire upon the typical altar came down from heaven, and so did this wrath which consumed our sacrifice.

3. God had a choice *delight* in the bruising him. With what ardency does he rouse up the sleepy sword, to sheathe it in the bowels of the man that is his fellow. *Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, strike the Shepherd, &c. Zech. 13. 7*; the latter part of the verse is applied to Christ, *Matt. 26. 31*. He commands it to pursue his design with a strength like a man newly refreshed and risen from sleep, and make the deeper gashes. Never was God so pleased in drawing his sword against his creatures, as in drawing it against the man his fellow, against the Shepherd, one of Christ's titles in scripture. It *pleased* the Lord to bruise him, *Isa. 53. 10*. God delighted in his bruising. The word *πᾶν* answers to *ευδοκίαν* in the new testament, when he saith that he is well pleased in Christ as his beloved Son. In the formal condition of this action, as it was conversant about punishment, it was not delightful to God, for he does not punish with his heart; *He doth not afflict willingly, or grieve the children of men. He delights not in the death of a sinner, Lam. 3. 33*, much less in the death of his Son, *Ezek. 18. 33*. But as finally considered, it is highly pleasant to him in regard of his glory and man's redemption. The reason why God bruised him, was not any delight simply in the death of Christ; but because in that act he broke in pieces our sins, which were the cause of the enmity, which were borne by Christ in his body upon the tree; *Who his ownself bare our sins in his own body upon the tree, that we being dead to sin, should live unto righteous-*

ness, by whose stripes we were healed, 1 Pet. 2, 14, which is a comment on, He hath borne our griefs, he was smitten of God, he was bruised for our iniquities, and with his stripes we are healed, Isa. 53. 4, 5. Christ appeared in that state, as bearing the whole body of sin, as well as the body of flesh.

The Jews aimed at killing his body, and God aimed at killing our sin. Every stroke he fetched was not ultimately to put his Son to death, but the enmity to death, to destroy the dominion and power which sin by its guilt had derived from the law; for so being *dead to sin* must be understood, which is clear by observing the like phrase, *Rom. 6. 11, 14*; where by *being dead to sin*, he means sin not having dominion, or condemning power over him, which is evidenced by a suitable expression of being *dead to the law, Rom. 7. 4*, which is no more than the law's not having dominion over us in regard of the curse, as appears, ver. 1, 2, 3. It was sin which had made the breach, that God principally struck at in the bruising his Son. He had a pleasure to bruise him as our surety, a trouble to bruise him as his Son. He was afflicted in his afflictions as his Son, and would have the sun in the heavens bear witness to it by hiding its head. But he was delighted with his sufferings as our Redeemer, because they were for the satisfaction of his justice, the condemnation of sin, and the restoration of his creature. In this respect, the death of Christ was the sweetest sacrifice that ever was offered, and consequently the smiting of him, the pleasantest work that ever God engaged in.

4. The *graces of Christ were most eminent* in enduring the inward impressions of wrath from his Father. The odours of his graces brake out more strongly by his Father's bruising him.

(1.) His *kindness and tenderness* to man. Christ was now upon the highest manifestation of his compassions to mankind. His death was the emphasis of

his love; his love was stronger and purer than the love of any creature, not only in regard of the excellency of his person, but the greatness of his sufferings. Had he endured only a death of the body, and not such a death that could have been inflicted only by an infinite hand, his love had lost much of its lustre. His love is principally laid upon the score of his death; *Who loved me, and gave himself for me, Gal. 2. 20.* If his passion had been only in his body, without impressions from an higher hand upon his soul, he had been in some measure paralleled in this (except in the dignity of his person) by several, who have freely resigned their lives to the enemies' swords, and some to inexpressible torments, for the public good of their country; as the Roman Regulus to the Carthaginians, because his country should not agree to disadvantageous conditions of peace. Besides, by this inward conflict he was fitted for further tenderness, having hereby an experience of the worst men were exposed unto by sin, that he might be more tender of their welfare, and with more melting affections solicit his Father for relief; hence did arise his strongest sympathizing with the condition of men.

(2.) His *obedience* to his Father. It is a signal testimony given him, that he was *obedient even to the death of the cross, Phil. 2. 8.* The sharper then his circumstances were upon the cross, the more illustrious his obedience was. The lustre of obedience is seen in engaging upon command with the most affrighting difficulties. It was a more full acknowledgment of his Father's sovereignty, and a stronger asserting his own obedience in making his soul an offering for sin, *Isa. 53. 10,* than if he had only made his body so by a temporal death, though I confess by soul many times in scripture is only meant life. And also to have his eye fixed upon the mediatory law, and his own duty arising from thence. When his Father seems to have forgotten all the promises he had bound himself in, and shot frowns into his heart, and denied him both

the light of sun and stars, comfort both from heaven and earth, he adds yet holy inflammations to obedience, which under those circumstances was most delightful to the Father, and most meritorious for us. It was then an offering and a *sacrifice of a sweet smelling savour unto God, Eph. 5. 2.*

(3.) His *fiduciary trust* in God, and the promises made to him, was more signal and noble. To trust a God smiling, when he does cast about us nothing but cords of love, is not a case of difficulty; every man hath a strong impulse to this, when God drops sweetness into him. But then is faith at the highest elevation, when a man can trust God, though he kills him; and wait upon him when he hides his face and drops hell from his hand. Thus was our Saviour's faith put to the trial by this proceeding; yet *he went forth conquering and to conquer*, and would not let go his hold, though his Father's beams were withdrawn, the heaven overcast with darkness, and all the curses of the law let fly at him, he would still depend upon God for his help in his greatest passion. *The Lord God will help me, Isa. 50. 7, 9. Who is among you that fears the Lord, that obeys the voice of his servant, that walks in darkness and sees no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God, ver. 10.* He would not let the storm blow these concerns of the world out of his hands, which then were managed by him; which trust of his, in this dismal time, he seems to set as a pattern for our imitation, in the words immediately following; intimating we should have his faith under those dreadful circumstances always in our eyes to encourage ours.

These graces of Christ, tenderness, obedience, and trust had not been set forth in such orient colours to us, had not his soul drunk a cup of wrath of his Father's tempering, as well as his body felt the strokes of human fury

5. I must add a *caution* or two for the better understanding this, and preventing any mistake.

(1.) Though Christ suffered from his Father an infinite wrath due to us, yet it was *not necessary it should be eternally endured by him*, because eternal wrath is due to us: for the eternity of punishment arises from the condition of the subject suffering, not from the nature of the punishment itself. A creature being a limited nature, cannot give an infinite satisfaction commensurate to an infinite justice, without suffering eternally. Therefore though infinite punishment be due, yet eternal punishment is not in itself due, but falls in, for want of the creature's ability to satisfy the demands of legal justice; since it cannot satisfy the law by one, or many acts of sufferings, it is always suffering, but never fully satisfies: but the infinite dignity of the person of Christ transcending all creatures, made the satisfaction he offered valuable without an eternal duration of those torments, which the insufficiency of the creature could never have made by suffering to eternity. He satisfies the debt, that pays at once the millions he owes; but he can never satisfy, but must remain in bondage, that pays a farthing in a year, when his debt amounts to millions; besides his running further into debt while he is paying.

The eternity of punishment proceeds not only from old debts, but new ones contracted by blasphemies, and hatred of God; for though some say that *in termino* the damned do not sin, I cannot think, but loving and glorifying God is the essential duty of a creature; and while he is a creature, let him be in what state he will, he is under the obligation of it. It is impossible a creature can by any conditions be freed from the obligation of loving and adoring his Creator. Christ might suffer the pains of hell, but not with all the accidental circumstances, nor in the place of hell: time and place are but accidental things, and not of the essence of punishment. It is not the place of hell makes hell, but the wrath of God in

what place soever it is poured out. A surety goes not to prison if he pays the debt; the prison is not a place of payment, but a place to enforce the payment, where there is unwillingness to pay.

(2.) This act of his Father in bruising him by his wrath, was no *approbation* of the guilt of the instruments in the death of his body. The sufferings in his soul in the garden, were before the Jews had laid hands on him to apprehend him. God dropped wrath upon his soul, yet had no hand in the crime of the Jews, in the covetousness of Judas, envy of the pharisees, cowardice of Pilate, and the fury of the people; these did spring from their natural corruption; they had one end, God another: they aimed at the satisfaction of those lusts, God aimed to content his justice, declare his wisdom, manifest his mercy, clear his holiness, remove the enmity, and relieve our souls. Though God approved of the death of Christ, and *delivered him up*, *Acts 2. 23*, yet he did not approve of those ends which managed them in that action. It was the highest guilt that ever was manifest upon the stage of the world in them, as it was the highest love that ever God showed in the ordering things to the redemption of man.

God determined redemption by the death of his Son, but did not positively determine the evil of the instruments. God laid no inward restraints upon them, left them to act as voluntary agents, he knew what their fury would do, and resolved to govern it for his own glory, and the good of the world. God had given them a free power to act otherwise: he did not necessitate them to this rage: their own corruptions met together to commit this horrid crime. They were not impelled by a command, threatening, or promise; his law was a rock against it, the destruction of their city, and the dissolution of their state were assured them by our Saviour, if they went on in that way; they had no motives from God, but from their own lusts, which were not of God's infu-

sion, but engendered by themselves, and inflamed by Satan. God only as a wise governor, used them, and ordered them to his own glorious ends; as a man uses the ravenous disposition of his hound to catch the hare, which the hound would of itself do, and governs it to his own ends, different from that of the animal.

In short, they acted utterly against the law in shedding innocent blood; God acted according to the mediatory law in bruising him, who had voluntarily substituted himself in our room; they aimed not at any one end which God aimed at in it; their intentions were wholly different; though God approved of the death of Christ precisely considered, because he delivered him up, yet his death, as managed by them, was the greatest wickedness that ever the sun saw: so that the Father's bruising Christ, does not in the least excuse the Jews; nor had they been excusable, had their intentions concurred fully with God's in the act; unless they had received a command from him to crucify him, as Abraham had for the offering his Son.

The Father then hath been *in Christ reconciling the world unto himself*; in bruising him by his wrath, glorifying his attributes in that act, which were necessary to be manifested in our redemption; laying all our sins upon him, delighting in it as it was for his glory, and our happiness, thereby winding up the graces of Christ necessary for the exercise of his office, and our redemption and imitation, to the greatest height, and thereby relieving us from that curse of the law, which we must always have borne, and could never have satisfied: so deep a hand had the Father in this work of redemption! The Trinity were signal in it, the Father bruising, Christ receiving the stroke, and the Spirit supporting him under it.

Use I. How may our *meditations* explore this unlimited ocean of love? Oh the depth of the riches of grace! That we should have the cursed pleasure of

sinning, and Christ the bitterness of suffering ; that the punishment due to us should be charged upon the Son of God by the Father ! Must the Father bruise the Son for us, who had deserved as well as devils, to be kept bound *in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day* ? Might he not more easily have condemned us, than condemned his beloved Son for us to a bitter death ? But here he would have infinite love, and infinite justice kiss each other. What could we do to deserve it ? If we could merit any good, could we merit so great a gift as this ? If we could have deserved, that he should open his arm to embrace us ; could we merit that he should wound his Son's heart to redeem us ? If we could deserve to be filled with his grace, could all the world deserve that his Son should be emptied of his glory ? Could they deserve that God should be wounded by God for their transgressions ? God gave Christ to die for us *while we were yet sinners*, *Rom. 5. 8* ; when we wanted motives of love, as well as merits of grace. and had no incentive of his grace, unless the want of grace could pass for one.

Were God as man, his thunder had crushed the world ; the disciples, the best of men upon earth at that time, would have been prodigal of God's thunderbolts, if they had had them in possession, when they desired fire from heaven upon the poor Samaritans. And had man a store-house of punishment, he would empty it upon persons that notoriously wrong him ; bnt God poured out those vials upon his own Son, which of right belonged to us. Consider, it was his Son whom he bruised, not a servant, not an unspotted angel ; his only begotten Son, the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person ; not an adopted Son, having only a dark representation of the divine nature : a begotten Son of his nature, not begotten of his will ; a beloved Son, not a disaffected Son : an only Son, not one chosen out of many children : God had no more in all the world,

and yet he bruised him ; he bruised him not only by a temporal death of the body, but by a weight of wrath on his soul ; not to purchase some small favour, but an everlasting inheritance.

How great is this love that valued our salvation above the life of an only Son, and shed a blood more valuable than the whole creation, to preserve ours, which could not be equivalent to the price of it ; and put him into the posture of an enemy to his Son, to make us his friends ! If the thunders of the law had been shot upon us, what strength had we to bear them ? What merit to remove them ? How great is the love of the Redeemer, to be willing not to be spared for a time, rather than millions of men should fail of being spared for ever ? It was *for our transgressions he was wounded, for our iniquities he was bruised, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him, Isa. 53. 5.* In every wound God gave him, he minded the full punishment of our sin, in the person of our Saviour ; that those whom he represented, might go free. He spared him not, abated not a mite of what justice might demand, that so his people might have a full redemption ; *He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, Rom. 8. 32.* He did not spare him in regard of the strength of justice, wherewith he punished him. What could more enhance the love of God, than the terrors inflicted on Christ ? And what could more enhance the love of Christ, than that he endured not only a bodily death, but a wrathful death in his soul for us ?

2. Let then this love engage every man *to come to God* through Christ. How should it constrain us into an humble compliance with him, and subjection to him ? If he hath bruised him for us, he will not bruise us, if we come to him. The blood shed by the order of God, is able to expiate a world of sins. God hath spent his wrath upon him, and hath none for those that accept of him. God hath discovered

a propensity to be reconciled, though we lie open to the stroke of his justice, and have no strength to withstand him ; a higher evidence he cannot give.

3. Spare *nothing for God.* He spared not the best thing he had in possession, and shall we spare our lust from being mortified by him ? The sin of man grieved him more than the death of his Son ; shall we preserve that which grieves him, and slight that which was his greatest pleasure ? How comes it to pass, we are so indulgent to our lusts, and murmur to be parted from that which is the grief of God, and the ruin of our souls ? Are those destroyers of our souls so extremely dear to us, that we are loath to bring them out of our bosoms, and deliver them to a crucifixion ; no, not in love to that God, who melted that Son in the fire of his wrath, out of love to us, whom he had cherished by the warmth of his bosom from eternity ? Sure if our souls were all flint, being smitten by such a love, they should yield some fire to consume our corruptions. How hateful should sin be to us, since it is evidenced to be so hateful to God, as that he would not spare his only begotten Son, when he lay under the imputation of our iniquities ; and caused the curses of the law to meet on him with all their stings, upon whom our sins had met in all their guilt ? Why should we spare that, for which God did not spare his Son, who never offended him, but highly pleased him ; and in this very act too, of bowing down under his strokes, by reason of our transgressions ? Why should we indulge that in our hearts, which God hath discovered by this act to be so abominable and odious to him, and so deserving an object of his just indignation. Let not that find rest in our bosoms, under which, while our Saviour was in the form of a servant, he found no rest from the curses of the law, and the wrath of his Father, till it had bruised him, and offered him up as a sacrifice of atonement for it.

8. The Father was in Christ reconciling the world, in *accepting him*, and his expiatory reconciling sacrifice. The steam of his precious blood went directly up to heaven. * As the smoke of the sacrifices ascended right up to heaven, not blown aside by any wind. This gave God a rest, of which sin after the creation had endeavoured to despoil him : for if God had a complacency in the work of creation, which is signified by the word refreshed ; שָׁנַף *In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed, Exod. 31. 17* ; much more must God be refreshed by the work of redemption by Christ, it being a restoring God's rest to him by a new creation, and a greater glory to God than the work of creation was, or simply considered, could be.

God performed what was incumbent on his part, according to the covenant of redemption, in regard of acceptation, after Christ had trod the wine-press alone ; and his grace was of the same tenor in the entertainment of Christ after his work, as it was in the first designation, and call of him to it ; the foundation, and the top-stone, being all the fruit of a condescending grace. The grace of God accepted it, and justice could plead nothing against it : grace and justice took him by each arm, and led him to the throne of glory. It was *God that justified him, Isa. 50. 8*. His entrance into heaven with the same clothes of flesh he wore upon the earth, only changed in the fashion, suitable to that glorious country, to which he was returning, was an evidence of his full acceptance.

(1.) It is *evident* that the Father did accept him.

[1.] The *types*, and *representations* of this reconciling sacrifice, were *grateful* to God upon this account : that first sacrifice after the deluge, was a sweet savour, or a savour of rest ; *And the Lord smelt a*

sweet savour, and the Lord said in his heart, *I will not any more curse the ground for man's sake*, Gen. 8. 21. הניחח He smelt in that sacrifice a savour of that wherein he should have a rest, and which should fully quiet his mind; and such a rest, that he *said in his heart*, or *swore*, Isa. 54. 9. The oath there mentioned can refer to no other place but this: for the sake of the antitype, which was respected in that offering, God swore that he would not any more curse the ground for man's sake.

What influence could the steam of the blood of a beast, and the stench of the burning fat, have upon a spiritual substance, an angel, much less upon God? Could the blood, and burnt carcasses of a few silly animals appease God so much, as to engage him to make so magnificent a promise not to curse the ground any more for man's sake, when the doleful cries, and vehement supplication of multitudes of dying men in the deluge, could not persuade him to stop his hand, and shut up the flood-gates of heaven? Could this make him order the constant course of nature, and succession of times, when in the very moment he promised it, he considered the perpetual fountain of evil in the heart of man, *that the imagination of his heart was evil from his youth*.

No, but God was pleased with a resemblance of Christ, presented to him in the faith of the offerer; as a man is with the picture of his friend whom he dearly esteems, and loves the person that presents such a medal to him, because of the estimation he hath of his friend. If the picture be so acceptable, because of the relation it hath to a delightful subject, how much more dear is the object itself? In the day of the general expiation of the Jews, ^{the} sins of the people were atoned by the sacrifice ^{of} the beast, and sprinkling of the blood ^{of} the beast, and ^{the} sins of a rational creature? a brute to ^{be} atoned? But this typified the mighty
And ^{the}

acceptableness of the blood of Christ, satisfactory to the justice, and pleasing to the mercy of God, whence all sacrifices received what efficacy they had; God's being pleased with the sacrifice of Noah, and others of his own appointing, was but to testify how highly pleasing the death of his Son would be to him, as it was an atoning sacrifice, and sweeter, than the iniquities of men were loathsome; both being under his consideration at one and the same time.

[2.] The time of Christ's coming, and being in the world, is called by way of eminency, *an acceptable time*; much more was his suffering so, which was the complement of his humiliation work. It was an acceptable time, because it was a day of salvation for man; *In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in the day of salvation have I helped thee, Isa. 49. 8.* They are the words of the Father to Christ, wherein he assures him of the acceptance of his sacrifice extensively for the Gentiles; *I will give thee for a covenant to the people*: which place the apostle uses as an argument to press the Corinthians to the sincere embracing of the gospel, *2 Cor. 6. 2*; because it was an *acceptable time*, a time wherein Christ was accepted, and all believers accepted upon his account; a time acceptable to God in the prophet; a time which therefore ought to be acceptable to man, as the apostle infers. It is therefore called *the acceptable year of the Lord, Isa. 61. 2.* The clearest and serenest time that ever God saw since the creation of the world.

But why was it so acceptable? Because it was the *day of vengeance of our God*; a day of vengeance upon sin, a day of the taking away, and removal of that which had caused all the enmity. Upon the knowledge of God's approbation of it, Christ prays for his assistance. A Psalm of *time of his suffering, Psal. 69. 13.* A Psalm applied to him in the gospel. *appears, ver. 9, 21, we my prayer*

is unto thee in an acceptable time, O God ; in the multitude of thy mercy hear me, in the truth of thy salvation.

When the whole world was set against him, and he was made the song of the drunkards ; the time wherein he put it up, and the circumstances he was in, were pleasing to God ; as being for his greatest service and glory. Let the mercy which engaged me first in this attempt, and the promise thou hast made me of the salvation of man, move thee to hear me now, and to manifest the truth of thy salvation, which thou hast committed to me, and I am now upon the effecting of. When was this acceptable time ? This עתה ? when he was in the *mire and deep waters*, ver. 14, when he was *reproached*, and *full of heaviness* ver. 20, When they gave him *gall* for his meat, and in his *thirst, vinegar to drink*, then was the time of this highest acceptation with God for the redemption of man.

[3.] All the *fruits* of his death manifest God's high acceptation of it.

(1.) The *mission* of the Spirit. The great end why the Spirit was sent, was to manifest this acceptance ; to evidence to the world that Christ was no impostor, because he was gone to the Father, *John* 16. 7, 8, 10, and had a welcome in heaven. The coming of the Spirit, and the working miracles in the name of Christ, kept up the credit of his mission and authority from the Father in the world. He was sent by the Father in the name of Christ ; *The Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name*, *John* 14. 26, i. e. upon the account of his mediation, as a fruit of it ; his name would have been of no authority for so great a gift, had not his death been of a grateful efficacy. And by the virtue of his intercession, *I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter*, *John* 14. 16, God unlocks to him all his treasures, as a testimony of the pleasure he took in his death, and the completeness of it to appease his anger, and satisfy the most

extensive demands of his justice ; so high a favour could not be dispensed, if justice had not first been fully contented.

This Spirit was also to abide for ever with his people ; *That he may abide with you for ever, John 14. 16.* Which shows the everlasting acceptance of this sacrifice by God ; for since the first coming of the Spirit was upon the first acceptance of his offering, the abiding of the Spirit evidences the perpetual prevalence of it with God ; for he could not abide any longer than the ground of his mission did endure, for they must both run parallel ; now, had he not gone away, the *Comforter* would not have come, *John 16. 7,* which refers not only to his ascension, but to his passion. And had he gone, and his death been unapproved by God, the Spirit had staid in heaven. His work also testifies this approbation. He was to bring things to *remembrance*, whatsoever Christ had said to them, which would never have been, had not Christ in every tittle been faithful to his Father's instructions. He was not to *speak of himself, John 16. 13.*

He was not to be the author of a new doctrine in the church, but to impress upon men what Christ had taught, and what he had wrought by his passion, he is therefore called the Spirit of truth, teaching and clearing up to the minds of men that truth which Christ had taught, and confirmed by his blood ; there was no error or mistake in any part of the management of this work on Christ's part ; for the Spirit is not sent to rectify any thing, but to raise the superstructure upon that sound foundation Christ had already laid. He was to declare only what he *heard, John 16. 13, 14.* To act the part of a minister to Christ, as Christ had acted the part of a minister to his Father ; to glorify Christ, to manifest the fulness of his merits, and the benefits of his purchase ; for he was to *receive of Christ, i. e.* the things of Christ, his truth, and his grace, and manifest it to their souls, and imprint upon them the comfort of both ; there had

been no foundation to glorify Christ, had not Christ in this work been glorious in the eyes of God, and been acknowledged by the Father to have glorified him to the utmost. Now since all this is come to pass, according as Christ did predict it; it is an undeniable evidence, that the Father hath fully approved of Christ's faithfulness in his office, and rests highly contented by his death.

(2.) The *answer of prayers* in his name. As his acceptance by the Father was the ground of all the miracles, which were wrought in the name of the Son, after his ascension; so it is the ground of all the answers of prayer that any believer receives from God; for our Saviour joins them both together, *He that believes in me, shall do greater works than those, because I go to the Father; and whatsoever you shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son, John 14. 12, 13.* Whatsoever you ask in my name, i. e. saith Cajetan, for my glory, not only in the intention of the petitioner, but the direct tendency of the thing petitioned for, I will do. His power to do it, is an argument of the strength of his oblation, and validity of the price. *That the Father may be glorified in the Son*, which is the end for which our prayers are answered; and is the event of those mercies we receive as answers from the hands of Christ.

The Father is glorified in the success of Christ's mediation, and the *finishing the work he gave him to do, John 17.* Every return of prayer upon the account of the merit of Christ, is a testimony of this success: and glory redounds by it, to the wisdom of the Father, for contriving; to the kindness of the Father, for appointing so able a Saviour, who could fully satisfy all the concerns of God, and provide for the necessities of the creature, and lay a foundation for the full communication of all mercies, needful for him. His receiving from his father the keys of all his stores, to dispense to believers, manifests how welcome he was

to the Father upon his return, after his conflict in the world ; and how successful he was in his execution of his office ; and how fully he contented the justice of his Father ; which could not by any right keep those stores from him after his meritorious passion ; so that in every answer of prayer, the wisdom, love, righteousness of the Father are glorified in the obedience, merit, and purchase of his Son ; the love of the Father is manifested, in sending so sufficient a Mediator ; and the justice and grace of the Father is glorified in accepting him, and performing the conditions requisite on his part by the covenant of redemption.

There is a most intimate conjunction of the glory of the Father and the glory of the Son in this mediation of Christ, which is the foundation of the acceptance of him, and his acceptance upon the same foundation will be perpetual ; because, as whatsoever he did here, was for the glory of his Father ; whatsoever he does above also in distributing his gifts, communicating his grace, is for the same end ; and therefore can never be unacceptable ; for by this acceptance of him, the Father hath a current and standing revenue of glory established ; his exchequer is daily filled with it, by virtue of this approbation. This acceptance is writ upon every return of our supplications, put up in his name, and tending to his glory ; the wonderful effects whereof have been known in all ages, and in the private experience of every sincere christian. Would God ever listen to those pleas in his name, were he not well pleased with the sacrifice of his person ? Would God ever expend his gifts to man, to keep up the credit of a person he had disowned ? This is the ground of that near communion believers have with God, nearer than Adam was admitted to in Paradise, wherein God descends to the familiar expressions of his grace, and converses with men, in and through a Mediator, who before were alienated from him, and made the marks of his wrath ; the *golden altar with incense*, *Rev. 8. 3*, is the pleasant perfume of his merits.

[4.] The *content* God has in men's believing on Christ, manifests it. God hath made faith, the acceptance of him, by men, the only condition of enjoying the fruits of his purchase; and it is not all the amiable virtues in the world, nor the riches of the whole creation, can procure us any right or title to him without it. So much does the Father stand upon the honour of his Son, that he will not grant an eternal happiness to any, but those that join with him in a sincere and hearty acceptation and approbation of him, his meritorious death, and the righteousness evidenced thereby; without this, no beams of glory can sparkle upon us, but an eternal wrath will swallow us up. As the Father hath approved him, so as to give all power into his hands; so he wills us to approve him, so as to bring all our own righteousness to the footstool of Christ, and embrace him only by a naked faith, that nothing of the glory of his work and merit may be clouded by any thing of our own. A true willing, cordial, lively acceptance is required, a resting on him for salvation, as God rests in him upon his satisfaction; an estimation of him approaching as near as a creature can to that of God's; the knowledge and embracing of him is the best savour to God, next to that of his own oblation; and man only in a believing embracing, stands in his true posture of acceptance with God.

[5.] The *bare declarations* of Christ to the world, are acceptable to God. The very discourses, and the discoursers of it, are a sweet savour to God; *We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish, 2 Cor. 2. 15.* Yea, though men cast away the thoughts of him, and perish in their unbelief; yet the proposal of it to them for their acceptance, is very sweet to the thoughts of God. As he will express how high his acceptation of them was, in the gifts of eternal happiness to them that entertain him, so the rejectors shall learn the same in the severity of the punishment in-

flicted on them. But whatever men do, the sound of it in the world is a sweet savour to him; and all men shall be at last convinced, that his righteousness was acceptable to God, because he is gone to the Father.

(2.) God accepted him with a *mighty pleasure*. As soon as he was made perfect by his sufferings, he was saluted an high priest, *Called an high priest*, *Heb. 5. 10*, Προσαγορευθεις saluted; προσαγορῖναι, ἀπαύζεται *Hesych.* When by the accomplishment of his passion, he became the author of eternal salvation, God congratulates him for his attainment of a new honour by his consecration, as men congratulate one another upon new acquisitions. It was a *sweet smelling savour to God*, *Eph. 5. 2*; there was *εὐδοκία* in his mission, and *εὐωδία* in his passion. God smelt a greater fragrance in his death, than stench from our sins; the sweetness of the one did drown the noisomeness of the other: his death was more satisfying to God, than our sins were displeasing. As he was a vine, he sent forth a delicious fruit of his blood to cheer both the heart of God and man; of God by the fragrancy of his satisfaction, of man by the fulness of his merit. God's soul delighted in him, *Isa. 42. 1*. He had an overflowing joy. All the attributes of God, which are the soul and perfections of the Deity, had an undisturbed acquiescence in him! There was an unblemished exactness in his work, because there was a fulness of delight in his Father. The delight he took in his designation, was rather heightened than diminished by his faithfulness in the execution. He was after his death brought near before God; *One like the Son of man, came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him*, *Dan. 7. 13*; two words to express the height of pleasure, *near and before him*. As if God would express his pleasure in the strait and intimate embraces of his Son, after his great engagement and return from the battle; and so welcome he was, that

God presented him with the dominion of the whole world. For the order of the vision expresseth first his incarnation, and then his exaltation ; so that this being brought near before the Ancient of Days, must be upon his ascension just after his death, and before his full investiture in the dominion of the world.

(1.) He pleased him *more than all the sacrifices under the Jewish economy.* Far more than all the devoted creatures, than oxen and bullocks which have horns and hoofs ; it is the expression concerning Christ, *Psal. 69. 31.* A mark of eminency, *how much more,* is put upon this offering, above the virtue of the blood of bulls and goats, *Heb. 9. 13, 14.* Though they were instituted by God, yet they were not acceptable to God, for the removal of sin, *neither could make the offerer perfect before him, Heb. 10. 1.* Nor could the heaps of sacrificed animals, the steams of brutish blood, persuade him to the justification of any one offerer ; *In burnt offerings or sacrifices he had no pleasure or rest, Heb. 10. 6.* He had a pleasure in them, not as they were the sacrifices of beasts, but representations of his Son's passion, and appointed as remembrances before him, of what was to be suffered by the true object of his rest in time. Christ is the person, and his death the sacrifice, wherein God only can find a rest ; *Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool : where is the house that you build unto me ? and where is the place of my rest ? For all those things hath my hand made, and all these things have been, saith the Lord. But to this will I look, to the poor, and a contrite Spirit, and that trembles at my word, Isa. 66. 1, 2.*

The temple and temple-worship was not the place of his rest ; God speaks with contempt of them, and seems to cast in the whole created compages of heaven and earth, as no firm object of his pleasure. But to *this* will I look, i. e. this *poor* and *contrite*

spirit נכה, *stricken*; of the same root as מכב, *smitten* of God and afflicted, *That trembled at my word, Isa. 53. 4*; he speaks as of one that trembled under the curses of the law, and felt the weight and bitterness of them; to him will I look, or *intently* and *fixedly* look, as the word signifies. The word, *tremble*, חקר, signifies to be *careful* or *solicitous*; as *2 Kings 4. 13*, it is so translated, *Thou hast been careful for us with all this care*, though it signifies also to tremble. Who was more stricken than Christ? Who more careful of the honour of God's law than Christ? Or who tasted more of the gall of the curse than Christ? Who can that signal mark, *this*, point to, but Christ? Who can be set in the balance with the whole frame of the creation, angels and men, but Christ? *All those things hath my hand made*; which seems to refer not only to the temple, but to the heavens, his throne, and the earth, his footstool; all those have been, and yet no rest found in them.

Now after the coming and striking of this person, upon whom the eye of God is intent, an end is put to all the ceremonial sacrifices; *He that kills an ox, is as if he slew a man: he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck, &c. ver. 3*. It was a disgrace to him, for men to think he could be pleased with such sacrifices, when he had appointed and accepted another; if they then kept them up, they should be an abomination to him, as the blood of swine; and yet they kept them up after this poor stricken spirit, after the offering of his Son: He calls them *their own ways, their abominations in which he delighted not*. And he would *bring their fears upon them*, ver. 4; perhaps it may be meant of their fear of the Romans, which you know they pretended, for the putting Christ to death, thereby to prevent any occasion of an invasion; and ver. 6, he prophecies of their destruction, but before this destruction she should be *delivered of a man child*, ver. 7. You know how he

armed the Romans against them, discharged his wrath upon them, gave up the city and temple, which they, and even their enemies, studied to preserve, for the death of his Son, as a prey to the fury and avarice of the enemies.

I have been the longer upon it, to shew, there is some ground to understand this place principally of Christ, though not to exclude the common interpretation; perhaps we might have had more ground for the understanding it so from Stephen's discourse, *Acts 7*, where he ends his citations with this place of scripture, ver. 48, 49, and descending to the application of what he had before cited, and charging upon them the blood of Christ, was interrupted by the fury of the Jews from any further light which his discourse might have given us. To consider it again; God demands where the place of his rest was? They might answer, the heavens. No, all these things hath mine hand made, yet no rest in them: But to this I will look. This is my rest, as the Antithesis carries it. This stricken in spirit, as if he had pointed to Christ on the cross and in the garden, trembling under a sense of wrath; an intent look, is a look of expectation, or a look of pleasure.

(2.) He shows his mighty pleasure in the acceptance of him by a *public proclamation* as it were, *Heb. 1. 6.* Again, when he brings his first begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him. Or as some read it, *And when he brings his first begotten into the world again*; understanding it of his resurrection, he then proclaims him to the angels, as an object of worship: he is the heir appointed, as well as the heir eternally begotten, proclaimed to the angels as their head, and the root of their standing. He was *seen of angels*, manifested to them in such a manner as their head, after he was justified by the Spirit, *1 Tim. 3. 16.* Methinks being seen of angels should signify some-

thing more than the simple vision. He was justified by *the Spirit*, when he was quickened and raised by the Spirit, 1 *Pet.* 3. 18; his being preached among the *Gentiles*, *believed on in the world*, and *received up into glory*, were evidences of this acceptance of him by the Father. He brings him in after his resurrection, as he did Adam after his creation, into the possession of the world, and gives him the dominion over the creatures. He brings in his Son, and gives him an empire over the angels as he was Mediator, which he had before as he was God blessed for ever; and the angels praise him and acknowledge him *worthy as the Lamb slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing*, *Rev.* 5. 11, 12.

(3.) He declares the pleasure he had in his acceptance of him, by *fixing his love for ever upon him*. He was settled in his Father's love, because he had performed the mediatory command; *If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love*, *John* 15. 10. A commandment was given him, and a commandment was kept by him, which obedience hath been hitherto the foundation of his Father's love to him as Mediator; and when he had fully finished it, would make a fixation of his Father's love. If he had not performed the mediatory command, he had had no interest in his Father's affection; as poor creatures if they observe the commands of Christ, shall for ever be rooted in his love, never to be cast out; so is Christ upon the observation of the command his Father gave, for ever settled in his affection and acceptance, whereby he hath given us assurance, that he was in Christ reconciling the world.

(3.) As the Father accepted Christ, and accepted him with a mighty pleasure, so this acceptance of him, and his death, redounds *to every believer*. Grace

and glory depend upon this; take away God's approbation, and the whole chain of privileges linked together by it falls in pieces.

(1.) It is the *stability of the covenant*. His approach to God as a surety, having engaged his heart for us, is that which God speaks of with a pleasing astonishment, and is so transcendently taken with it, that he settles the covenant of being their God, and making them his people upon it: That is the issue, *Jer. 30. 21, 22.* And the everlastingness of the covenant is founded in his being a witness to the people; *I will make an everlasting covenant with you, behold I have given him for a witness to the people, Isa. 55. 3. 4.* All the promises of God are yea and amen, in him the faithful and true witness, *Rev. 3. 14.*

(2.) Justification is *founded* upon this acceptance. God was in Christ reconciling the world, i. e. not imputing their trespasses to them, but discharging them. For the pleasure he took in Christ's sufferings upon mount Calvary, he graciously forgets our sins, and of rebels entitles us heirs. There is a fundamental justification of future believers in the discharge of Christ, though not formal and actual till they believe. As there was a fundamental condemnation of all in the loins of Adam upon his fall, not actual till they were in being, and did actually partake of his nature: so Christ having his discharge as a common person, all those whose sins he bore, have a fundamental discharge in that of his person, from any more suffering. As he bore the sins of many as a common person in the offering of himself, and satisfied for their guilt, so he hath an absolution as the head from all that guilt he bore; no more to lie under the burden of our sins, or endure any penalties of the law for them; *As it is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment; so Christ was once offered for the sins of many, and unto them that look for him, shall he appear without sin unto salvation, Heb. 9. 27.* As judgment is appointed

for all men, as well as death, and they receive their judgment after death; so Christ after his death was judged by God, and judged perfect, fully answering the will and ends of God, and shall not appear any more as a sacrifice, but as a perfect Saviour; he is no more to appear in a corruptible body prepared to bear sin by imputation; but in a glorious body, as a manifestation of his justification, fitted for the comfort of those that look for him; unto them does this judgment extend; for upon the score of this judgment passed by God in his behalf, he is to appear at length to them for salvation. For if Christ satisfied for believers, he is accepted by God on their behalf; therefore his sufferings are imputed to them; for it would be strange that Christ should endure a punishment for them, be approved of God as standing in their stead, and this acceptance not be counted to them. If there be an approbation of his sufferings for us, there is an imputation of his sufferings to us, or else no satisfaction is made to justice upon our account. As he suffered, so he was acquitted as our surety and representative.

(3.) The acceptation of our *persons and services*, redounds to us from the Father's acceptance of Christ. His love to Christ as Mediator, is the ground of our acceptation; *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved, Eph. 1. 6.* He chose him first as the head, and his members in him; he accepts him as the first beloved, and believers in him. Had not Christ been accepted first, none could have pretended an holiness worthy of the notice of God. The grace of God is the cause, his love to Christ the ground, acceptation of us in him the effect of both. In ourselves, we are the objects of his anger; in Christ, the marks of his choice affection. It is the pleasure God took in the obedience of his Son, which makes believers as his members; and their services, though weak imitations of him, delightful to God.

(4.) The *constant wooings of men by God* flow from hence. He intreats and beseeches men to embrace him, and to be reconciled to him, because he hath been thus reconciling the world in Christ; *As though God did beseech you by us, be ye reconciled to God, 2 Cor. 3. 20.* The intreaty and arguments used to persuade men to the acceptance of it, could have no validity without this foundation, that a reconciliation is wrought, and the expiatory sufferings of Christ accepted by God. So much is God in love with Christ's performance, that he condescends to the lowest step, to beseech, and solicit the creatures' affections for him, and presses them with that sweet importunity, as loath to take any denial at their hands.

From these considerations we see, 1. the inexpressible *value* of Christ's mediation with God. God hath given the highest evidence of the grandeur of it, of Christ's faithfulness in the discharge of the trust committed to him, glorifying the Father in all that he undertook and taught. It is from his being a *righteous branch*, that he is become the *Lord our righteousness, Jer. 23. 5, 6*; he was by his voluntary submission, and his Father's designation, made sin for us; which performance is so grateful, that all that believe in him are made, not bare righteousness, but *the righteousness of God in him*: he seems to become sin itself, wholly guilt, and believers thereby righteousness itself in the presence of God. His death is so valuable as to procure the casting our sins into the depths of the sea, and the advancing our persons to the heights of glory, to stand before God in his kingdom. Our persons odious in Adam are made beautiful in Christ, and our duties that smell rank by nature, smell sweet by his merits, *Rev. 5. 8.* The odours of his merits are so strong as to overcome the stench of our nature. There is no need of any masses, human satisfactions, and additions of any merits of our own.

2. *Comfort to believers.* Since this acceptance,

how does justice itself smile? 'The rod of God's fury falls out of his hand upon the sweetness of his Son's offering, and gives way to a sceptre of grace: nothing was omitted, which was necessary for the pleasure of God's piercing eye. This may well calm the fears in our hearts, because it smoothes the frowns in God's face. If no charge can be brought against Christ, since the acknowledgement of the sufficiency of his offering, no charge can be brought against believers. For whom was it performed, but for them? For whom was it accepted, but for them? The acceptance must be for the same ends for which his sufferings were endured. Shall not then the influence of it upon them, answer the intention of it for them? If it should not, the first acceptance would be in vain: Christ must then return to offer another sacrifice, which shall never be. In the acceptance of Christ for you, he hath accepted you in him. He stood in no need of it, but in relation to you; he was the eternal Son of God, acceptable to the Father, but by this he is established an eternal Saviour. An obedient faith on our part, will entitle us to salvation on his part; *And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him, Heb. 5. 9.*

Since God hath accepted him for you, God will appear full of omniscience to understand your wants, full of compassion to pity you, full of power to relieve you, full of wisdom to guide you, full of grace to pardon you, full of glory to bless you for ever. Every believer will be accepted by God, because by his faith he owns that which gives God a rest, and as the grace of God assists him, so he contributes to God's contentment. O then remember your offences against God to be humbled, and God's acceptance of the blessed offering to be comforted: the odour of this sacrifice was so agreeable to God, that not content to discharge us from the condemnation we had merited; he would also that we should partake of the life, and enjoy the kingdom of his Son, judging it not

equity to make any separation between the head and the members, the Redeemer and the redeemed; and a disparagement to the greatness of the offer, and offering to shut heaven against them; hereby is not only condemnation removed, but eternal glory assured. It is not only a *not perishing*, but an *eternal life* upon faith, *John 3. 16.*

3. This is the *main foundation of faith*. How invaluable had all Christ's sufferings been, and how vain our faith, had God disapproved him; justice had been armed against us, if a blemish had been in the oblation: faith first reads Christ's commission, then casts its eye upon the streams of blood flowing from his heart, listens to his doleful cries, considers them for itself; but ultimately rests itself in God's acknowledgments of the full discharge of the debt, and his cancelling the obligation wherein Christ was bound. After this, none have any excuse for unbelief, unless they will accuse God of weakness, or falsity, and imposture in bearing witness to the faithfulness of one, who had not discharged his office.

4. *Glorify God*. It is the use Christ in the prophetic psalm makes of it. *Praise ye the Lord all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him all ye the seed of Israel, for he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, neither hath he hid his face from him, Psal. 22: 23, 24: a meiosis.* His face indeed was hid for a time, but to return with fresher and brighter beams; and the warmth at the return made a recompence for the clouds upon the cross. How should our hearts swell with praise, as heaven did with joy, and the thankful gladness of our hearts keep time with the joyful acceptance of his Father?

5. *Accept Christ*. What is worthy of God's acceptance, cannot be unworthy of ours. ^{if} this be agreeable to the fountain of good ^{ness}, why should it not be grateful to the ^{of} streams? That which gratifies an infinite abominable sinks of corruption: ^{if} gratify us, were

it is the highest contrariety to God, not to seek and acknowledge rest in that wherein God finds a full content. If the pure eye of God behold not the least spot to disturb, but a commensurate goodness to settle his rest: what can we see in Christ, which should make us nauseate him? Christ is the object of God's rest, and well may be of ours. As God rested not in any thing after the degeneracy of the world, but in Christ; so neither should we rest in any thing, since the degeneracy of our hearts, but in the same object. God will love us highly for our acceptance of him; God is highly pleased with his creature's converse with him, in and by a Mediator. *They have well spoken, that which they have spoken, Deut. 18. 16, 17*, when they desired that God would not speak to them, but by Moses, a type of the Mediator. God never gave them so great a commendation, as in this case, nor ever approved so highly of any action, or words that came from the body of this people. God dwells above the clouds, we cannot come to him, but by Christ; he is a God of vengeance, and we the meritors of it; we cannot be screened from his wrath, but by Christ; accept him, and God will accept us in him, refuse him, and all the other righteousness in the world cannot secure us. Let God's approbation be the director of ours: acceptance of Christ, is a noble imitation of God.

PART IX.

THE RESURRECTION AND GLORIFICATION OF
CHRIST.

His resurrection the act of the Father—The propriety of this—This act had an immediate reference to the works of reconciliation—The ground of faith and comfort—Jesus raised to be glorified—His essential and mediatorial glory—Their difference—Personal glorification—His glorification ascribed to the Father—Why the Father glorified him—What is requisite to the exercise of his dominion—His right to his exaltation—The design of it—Testifies the Father's acceptance of his person and death—The manner of his exaltation—The nature of his dominion—The encouragement faith receives from the exaltation of Christ—The great comfort of it—Sin expiated—Accusations answered—Wants supplied—Enemies subdued—The subject terrible to unbelievers—The necessity of subjection to Christ—And of glorifying God in him.

THERE was a necessity of his resurrection, in regard of the predictions; for since the Messiah was to die, and not see corruption; *Thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption, Psal. 16. 10*; it is clear, he was to rise again; else his body in a natural course

would have seen corruption. This resurrection is a clear evidence of his acceptance; himself uses this as an argument, both of the authority of his commission, and fidelity in execution. *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up, John 2. 18, 19, 21,* speaking of the temple of his body. He is the *faithful witness*, manifested to be so, by being the *first begotten from the dead, Rev. 1. 5.* Without his resurrection, his acceptance had not been made manifest; neither could he have appeared in the quality of a Redeemer and High Priest, had he, like one of us, laid rotting in the grave; he had not without it, been powerfully declared to be the true Son of God, nor consequently evidenced to be our Redeemer, nor been in a capacity, according to the decree, to reign to the ends of the earth. All men would have concluded him an impostor; but by rising up from the power of an ignominious death, he was manifested to angels and men, to be not only God's beloved Son, but his obedient servant, faithful in all his will, the exact revealer of his counsels, and grateful to him in his sufferings; whereby not only the valuableness and sufficiency of his passion, for a foundation of everlasting reconciliation, but the actual acceptance of it was evidenced: it was a testimony to Christ of his faithfulness, a testimony to us of the approbation of his sacrifice, for those purposes for which it was offered.

As his resurrection by the Father was as it were a new generation of him as the Son of God; *Declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead, Rom. 1. 4;* so it was as a new constitution of him as the Mediator of men; himself calls his resurrection a *regeneration, Mat. 19. 28,* and he is therefore called, not the first risen, but the *first born from the dead, Colos. 1. 18;* this being a new birth of him from the womb of the earth. It is a rule in the language of the scripture, *Aliquid factum dicitur, cum factum esse demonstratur.* Hereby his person

was owned to be the Son of God, and his works and suffering, as our Redeemer, were declared highly pleasing; the suit was depending till his resurrection, but then the controversy between God and sinners upon the account of the law, was at an end, and the bond was cancelled in token of full satisfaction; the public decree of God determined it; the decree is extant, *Psal. 2. 7*, the interpretation of it. *God hath fulfilled the same unto us, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written, Acts 13. 33. Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee, Psal. 2.*

Thus was he justified and declared righteous, and his obedience, which run through all his acts, exceeding acceptable. He was indeed approved of God by miracles, which God did by him in the time of his life, *Acts 2. 22*. And by such miracles that could not fall under any jealousy, but by those he was testified to be a prophet, a man approved of God, a teacher come from God, as Nicodemus argues, *John 3. 2*. But by his resurrection he was testified to be more than a man, the Son of God in his majesty. Notwithstanding the miracles of his life, he appeared in the form of a servant, and scarce assumed any other title, than that of the Son of man; but after he had by his conquest made death his captive, he illustriously appears to be the Son of God, the glory of which is increased by his ascension, exaltation, and the plentiful effusion of the Spirit, by all which his righteousness and obedience was declared to be pure without any mixture, perfect without any defect; clear gold without any dross, and a full payment of the utmost farthing to divine justice, for believing sinners.

(1.) It was *the act of the Father*. The body of Christ was raised; and resurrection is not the work of either soul or body, but of God only. God raised him from the dead in such a manner, as to declare him to be his Son; it being the declaration of the Father, his resurrection was the act of the Father; *God raised him from the dead, Acts 13. 30, 33*. Upon

which account God is set forth in this raising Christ as the object of faith ; *If you believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, Rom. 4. 24.* This was the act of the Father, whose Son he was by eternal generation. It is particularly ascribed to the Father ; *As Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, Rom. 6. 4,* by the glorious power of the Father, which was made illustrious in it ; some take *the glory of the Father* for the formal cause, as though the meaning were, Christ in his resurrection was adorned with the glory of the Father ; others for the final cause ; he rose to the glory of the Father ; but to take it for the efficient cause, is more natural ; as the love of the Father was most magnificent in giving him to die, so the power of the Father is most glorious in unloosing the bands of death, and delivering him from the grave with triumph ; because the reuniting the soul to the body, and restoring it to all the functions of life, is an act of creative power : and this resurrection was more glorious than a single creation, in regard of the mighty load of guilt Christ lay by imputation under, when upon the cross.

It is true, this resurrection was the work of the Trinity ; it was the work of the Spirit, he is therefore said to be *quickened by the Spirit, 1 Pet. 3. 18 ; and justified in the Spirit. 1 Tim. 3. 16.* His resurrection was the justification of his person, in all that he performed for the satisfaction of God. Christ also is said to raise himself ; *I will raise it up, John 2. 19,* and had an authority to take up his life again, *John 10. 18.* As he is said to conquer his enemies ; *He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet, 1 Cor. 15. 25 ;* yet the Father is said to do it, *Psal. 110. 1.* For acts of power are more peculiarly ascribed to the Father, and resurrection is an act of omnipotence, as wisdom is ascribed to the Son, and love to the Holy Ghost. The conquest of his enemies is the act of his Father, and therefore the beginning of his triumph, and the overpowering the great enemy, death. And

as he waits at God's right hand till his enemies be subdued, so he waited in the grave till his discharge was ordered by the Father.

2. It was most *congruous and regular* for the Father to be principal in the raising Christ. The Father had the power of mission, and therefore of acceptance; and therefore the act whereby it was declared did principally pertain to the Father, as it was a full manifestation of the faithfulness of Christ in his office; as he received his commission from his Father, so it was most regular he should receive his discharge from the same hand, because he had been faithful to him that appointed him. The Father was the creditor, he had covenanted with his Father to suffer and give him satisfaction; the Father then was the most proper judge whether the articles were performed, or no; whether the satisfaction was valid, and the debt paid; as the Father was the law-giver and judge, the delivering Christ to death belonged to him; upon the same account, the delivering him from prison and judgment belonged to the Father: none have power to remit or discharge after the sentence, but the supreme authority: so that the raising Christ belonged as properly by right to the Father, as the power of delivering him to death.

When the account was made up in heaven, and not a farthing of what was due was found wanting, but the demands of justice fully balanced by the satisfaction of Christ, *he was taken from prison and judgment-Isa. 53. 8*, and God sends an angel to *roll away the stone, Mat. 28. 2*, not indeed to make way for the resurrection of Christ, as though there was a necessity of rolling away the stone, to give his body passage out of the grave: but to evidence to the woman that intended to come into the sepulchre, that his discharge came from heaven, and that they might see the grave empty of his body. As he that is in prison for debt, ought not to go out without the judge's authority; so Christ was held in the fetters of death, till

his Father's absolution, and then was delivered from the grave, as a debtor from prison. *God loosed the chains of death ; it being not possible that he should be held in those chains, Act 2, 24 ;* for it was not equitable that after he had satisfied, he should be held longer in his fetters : the judge only can free from prison ; and when the law, where any is imprisoned, is satisfied, he is in justice bound to order the discharge, and pronounce in open court the acquittal of the prisoner.

(3.) This act of the Father in raising him, *was with respect to this work of reconciliation*, and the accomplishment of all the fruits of it.

[1.] For the *justification* of every believer. As the same authority which had delivered him to death, raised him from the grave, so in the pursuance of the same ends for which he delivered ; *He was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification, Rom. 4. 24, 25.* It is declared as an encouragement to believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead ; which argument would have no validity in it to incite the soul to faith in God, if those ends there spoken of were not actually aimed at in those acts of his. The Father, who was the author of both, had the same ends in both those acts ; they were the acts of the Father, and therefore the ends of the Father. Though his death was the foundation of his merit, yet his resurrection is the foundation of the application of that merit to all his seed. At this door comes in our justification ; as God, in delivering him up to undergo the curse of the law, delivered us in him, and looked upon believers as suffering in him the punishment due to sin ; so in raising him, he virtually raised them in him, and fundamentally comprehended them in that discharge.

His resurrection was not meritorious of our justification ; that was the fruit of his death ; he paid by his death what was due for our sins, and began to receive at his resurrection what was due for his suffer-

ings : by compact he suffered for us, and by compact he was raised for us. As the expiation of our offences depended upon the death of our surety, so the justification of our persons depended upon the discharge of our surety ; and to that end he was raised up by God to be a foundation of, and encouragement to, our faith to believe the promises of God, and grow up into hope of the enjoyment of them. *God raised him up from the dead, that your faith and hope might be in God,* 1 Pet. 1. 21.

[2.] For the *regeneration* of the seed promised him. This depends upon his resurrection, and was the aim of God in it. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,* 1 Pet. 1.

3. As the resurrection of Christ, was as the Father's new-begetting of him to be the Son of God ; so in regard that he rose as a common person, his resurrection was a new-begetting all his elect to be the sons of God ; herein was the foundation of their regeneration, as well as of their justification settled ; he was taken from prison, and from judgment, and then it follows, *Who shall declare his generation,* Isa. 53. 8. For by the resurrection of Christ, God having declared himself pacified, hath opened all the treasures of his grace to Christ, for the framing a new generation in the world to serve him ; without which merit of the suffering, and discharge thereupon, there could not have been a mite of grace given out of God's treasury for the renewal of the image of God in any one person. The spiritual resurrection of any one soul, is as much the effect of this resurrection of Christ, as the resurrection of bodies shall be at the last day.

That power which raises any soul from a death in sin, would never have wrought in any heart without this antecedent to it ; it would have wanted the foundation of satisfaction ; for God only sanctifies as a God of peace. And therefore the power

which was exerted for the raising of Christ from the grave, was put forth as a power to work in the hearts of all his seed. As the subject of this resurrection was not a private person, but a public representative: as God acted in it in a public manner, as the governor and creditor; so the power whereby he raised him was, as I may call it, a public power, a pattern of what was to be spiritually wrought in the hearts of all those whose debts he paid, and for whom the payment was accepted by God. His working in all believers, is but *according to the working of that mighty power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, Eph. 1. 20.* It was also a pattern of that power which should be employed for doing all works necessary in the hearts of those that believe. It is the fountain from whence all spiritual life streams down to us; by this God put into him the spring of the Spirit of life to flow out upon all his seed.

[3.] For to give us the *highest security* for all new-covenant mercies. This security was intended by God in the very act of raising him. *For as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David, Acts 13. 34.* This was in the thoughts of God, when he put forth his hand to the raising of him. There can be no greater security than the fulfilling of the promises made, which the apostle there places in the resurrection of Christ; for, saith he, *We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promises made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again, Acts 13. 32, 33.* What promise was that which was thus fulfilled? it was the promise of an everlasting covenant, *Isa. 53. 3,* whence this is cited, that grand promise that God made to Adam and (in him) to all his posterity, was fulfilled in this act of raising Christ. It being a declaration of the bruising the serpent's head, the author of all the enmity between God and man, by the seed of the wo-

man : the promises also of blessing all nations in the seed of Abraham, and the bringing in an everlasting righteousness were fulfilled. These were but initially performed by the sending Christ and bruising him. But the wisdom of God, the righteousness of God, and the truth of God, all shone forth in their fullest beams, in the raising him from the dead ; which was the top-stone of our reconciliation, as his death had been the corner-stone and foundation. The certain enjoyment of all the blessings of the new covenant is ensured to us by this act of God, and so intended by him in the act itself ; this giving and dispensing of the sure mercies of David, i. e. the making all the mercies which this our David had purchased by his sacrifice, and had been promised to him in the first agreement, sure and settled for ever.

How *strong a ground* is here for our faith and comfort ? When our Saviour was upon the cross, there was a black cloud of wrath between God and him, the heavens were dusky, the face of God veiled ; but in his resurrection the heavens looked clear, the wrath of God was pacified. It left its sting in our Saviour's side, Christ therefore after his resurrection salutes his apostles with peace ; *And Jesus said to them again, Peace be unto you ; as my Father hath sent me, so send I you, John 23. 21* ; which seems to be more than an ordinary salutation, since it is attended with a special commission, the fruit of his reconciling death. Peace dawned at his birth, but was not in its meridian till his resurrection. Thereby he was cleared to all the world, and eased of the burden of men's sins, which bowed down his head upon the cross. Had not God been a God of peace, i. e. fully reconciled by his death, he had not brought him again from the dead, but suffered him to have lain there ; *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, Heb. 13. 20*. Would we be perfect in every good work ? Would we do the will of God ? Would we have every thing well-pleasing in

his sight wrought in us ? Then we should go to him as a God of peace ; as a God lifting up Christ from the grave, that he might, with honour to all his attributes, work such excellent things in the hearts of all that believe in him, and act faith upon this act of God's power, righteousness, and truth, in the raising the great Shepherd of our souls. He delights now to be called the God of peace, and by this act hath laid aside what was terrible to us in the consideration of a judge, for the breach of his law. Why may we not hope to attain whatsoever is needful at his hands, since he hath clothed himself with a new title ? And it is to be observed, that the apostle saith, God brought him *again from the dead, through the blood of the everlasting covenant* ; he entered into prison as our surety, and paying the price, was delivered by that payment, and freeing himself by that payment from any more satisfaction, he frees all those that are his members, so that the blood of Christ will have the same virtue for those, that it hath for himself. God manifested it to be the blood of the everlasting covenant, a blood sufficient to establish the everlasting covenant upon, by this deliverance of him. God hath no more to lay to his charge, all bonds are cancelled, all actions against him fully answered ; he rose not only by his own power and right, but by his Father's warrant, whereby God owned himself his Father, and in him our Father, upon which account he tells Mary, *I ascend to my Father and your Father, my God and your God, John 20. 17* ; this resurrection is the testimony God is become your Father as well as mine, the enmity is abolished, you stand in a relation to God, and I ascend to him as your Father, as well as mine, to take possession from his hands of the inheritance I have purchased for you.

10. God *glorified* Christ, and so was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, fully establishing this reconciliation wrought by him. All power was

promised to him; *I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, Psal. 2. 8.* It was performed; *All power is given me, Mart. 28. 18.* His resurrection had not attained its full end and perfection, had he not been exalted to a glorious government; it was for this end *διὰ τούτο* that he died, that *he rose again and revived, that he might be Lord both of dead and living.* He died to purchase it, he rose to possess it, and lives for ever to manage it. He was exalted for the honour of God, and the happiness of believers, as Joseph the type was advanced to manage things for the interest of the crown, and the good of the people.

First, we must premise those two things. There is a *double* glory and dominion of Christ.

I. *Essential* as God; which was communicated to him in the communication of his essence; for being God from eternity, he had all the prerogatives of God.

II. *Mediatory*, which was by agreement between them to be bestowed upon him, upon the accomplishment of this work in the world. He had a right to this by the donation of his Father at his conception; for he was made Lord, when he was made Christ; *Know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified; both Lord and * Christ, Acts 2. 36.* But he had not his actual investiture, and full settlement in it, till after his resurrection, because his reconciling death was to precede his entrance into glory, where he was to reside for the management of this power. In this respect he is called the *heir of all things, Heb. 1. 2;* which inheritance is not meant of his essential dominion, for so he is not appointed, but begotten heir. He might then be said to be constituted God, as well as heir; which would be an improper speech, like the Socinians, *Deus factus.* What is natural, cannot

be said to be by constitution ; the one is voluntary, the other necessary. He is appointed heir, as he was appointed Mediator, *Heb. 3. 2.* He was Mediator by a voluntary designation, he was heir by a voluntary donation, and all judgment was committed to him by a voluntary deputation ; but he was a Son by a natural generation : again, an heir succeeds in the place of another ; so Christ as Mediator succeeds in the place of his Father, in regard of government, as his delegate and deputy ; but what the Son hath from the Father as God, he hath not as his deputy, but by an essential, natural, and eternal communication.

So that these two differ. 1. The one belongs to his *essence as God*, the other to his office as Mediator. 2. The essential is by *nature*, the mediatory is conferred as a *reward* of his humiliation and expiation of sin ; *Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, Phil. 2. 8, 9 ;* viz. because of his obedience to death. The one belonged to him without suffering ; but his suffering death for us, was the moral cause of his exaltation ; since the heavenly sanctuary was shut against us, the expiation of our crimes must precede his entrance into it, and possession of it. 3. The essential is an *absolute sovereignty*, the mediatory is delegated. For it is a judgment committed to him by the Father, *John 5. 22.* In the first he is one with the Father, in the other he is the Father's substitute and deputy ; his Father's lord lieutenant in the world according to a derived authority. 4. The essential is *wholly free*, it hath no obligation upon it ; the mediatory hath a charge annexed to it. It is a dominion with rules, and given him as a means to bring believers to salvation, which is part of the work belonging to the charge of Mediator, *John 17. 42 ;* he hath this power given him by the Father, that *he should give eternal life to all that God hath given him.* 5. The essential is *necessary* ; he cannot possibly be God without an infinite glory and dominion : *the other, though due by*

covenant, yet is a free gift ; God hath given him a name which is above every name, Phil. 2. 9. ὑπερίσταιναι. Not that God, who is infinite goodness and holiness, would ever let such an exquisite holiness and affection to his glory, which Christ discovered in the whole course of his obedience, pass without a rewarding and crowning it with the greatest glory in his treasury ; It being an obedience superior to that of all the angels, it required a recompence superior to all their glory.

Yet that high exaltation is a free * gift, 1. In regard that the whole *economy*, the mission of Christ and his incarnation, is a free gift of God to us ; and in his exaltation he is considered as appearing for us, and receiving from the Father those treasures which were to be dispensed to us, and that power and dominion which was to be employed for us. 2. Because as it was the *free gift of God*, to unite our flesh to the Deity of the second person, it was also an act of free grace to continue the manifestation of the glory of the divinity in the same flesh. 3. Because the death he suffered, and the conquest he gained thereby, being by the powerful *assistance of the Father*, according to those promises of assistance made to him, his glory may be well said to be a free gift from the Father. 4. Because given without constraint, with a free pleasure, though upon a valuable consideration.

6. The essential is *eternal*, without beginning and end ; *the mediatory hath a beginning after his death and resurrection, and shall have an end.* When all the seed are brought in and perfected, all enemies subdued and conquered, Christ shall resign his commission and his people, for whose sake he was commissioned and deputed to this government, unto his Father, 1 Cor. 15. 24, when he shall still reign with his Father in the glory of the Deity. The Father lays aside his immediate government, that Christ may be

all in all; at last Christ shall resign the government to the Father, *that God may be all in all*, and delight immediately in his people, when they shall be fully perfected, and free from sin. The power, in regard of the particular ends for which it was conferred on Christ, ceases when those ends cease; but what belongs of right to him as God, or what was given him by covenant, as a reward for his obedience, will endure as long as the humanity remains united to the divinity.

Secondly. This is to be considered, that it was the *person* of Christ which was exalted by the Father. The subject of this power is the person of Christ, and the execution of this power is by the person of Christ.

1. His *divine* nature was exalted and glorified in regard of its *manifestation*. The Father would manifest, that the Redeemer of the world was God blessed for ever, above angels or men. His Deity in the time of his humiliation was incapable of any change, and therefore neither did nor could receive any detriment in its nature and essential perfections. It could not be subject to infirmities, or fall under the strokes of death: yet the Son of God emptied himself in taking upon him the form of a servant, and veiled that Deity which dwelt bodily in him, by the flesh he took, and suffered reproaches and indignities from men, and masked the glory of it by human infirmities; but in his resurrection and ascension, the Deity did gloriously spring out of that obscurity, and brake out from under the cloud of his humanity in a glorious lustre, which before had discovered itself in some few sparklings: he was now clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, and his name is called *the Word of God*, *Rev.* 19. 13; i. e. he was manifested to be the word of God after and upon the account of his death.

2. His *human* nature was exalted and glorified by a *new acquisition and addition of perfections of glory*,

which had been never conferred upon any man or angel. That was really delivered from all that suffering and debasement it had been subject to before, in the days of his flesh; and was drawn up into a great and glorious condition, and endowed with gifts above all creatures in heaven and earth, and received a new royalty and power of ruling; and as the Mediator had performed a new work in dying, so he received a new glory in his exaltation. Thus the person of Christ, and each nature, may be said to be glorified in a distinct sense. The divine in the manifestation of it, from that obscurity wherein it had been disguised, the human in the reception of that which it had not before possessed. This was fully conferred on him at his ascension, and sitting down at the right hand of God; whereas before, the name of a servant was written upon him, the fashion of his vesture being changed, there was a new name written upon him, *King of kings, and Lord of lords, Rev. 19. 16.*

These things premised, I observe, *First*, the exaltation and power of Christ, is every where *ascribed to the Father*. It was his promise; *I will make him higher than the kings of the earth, Psa. 89. 27.* Several monarchies overtopped the Jewish kingdoms, throughout the whole duration of that state. He bruised him as he was the Rector and Judge of the world, to whom belonged the right of punishment. He advanced him as the supreme Governor and Fountain of all honour; and thus he was in Christ ordering the application, and ensuring reconciliation to us upon the conditions in his word.

1. In regard of *donation*. It is a gift from the *Ancient of days, Dan. 7. 14.* God anointed him to this office, as well as to the rest. He sets him in the highest place next to himself, at his right hand; *The Lord said unto my Lord, Psa. 110. 1*; gives him all the ensigns of authority, a crown in the day of his espousals, an everlasting throne, a sceptre of righ-

teousness; *But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, Heb. 1. 8.* A sword in his mouth, the keys of life and death, all royal prerogatives; subjects all the angels to him, to receive commissions from him, and be at his service; they are now the eyes and horns of the Lamb, ministers and instruments of his jurisdiction *. He *committed all judgment to his Son, John 5. 22*; not only a power of judging or sentencing, but a power of governing and conducting all things.

In regard of the power he received, he is said to sit down *at the right hand of the power of God, Luke 22. 69.* In regard of the authority invested in him, he is said to sit down *at the right hand of the throne of God*; in regard of the glory conferred upon him, he is said to sit down *at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, Heb. 8. 1.* His royal power to manage it, and the glory attending it, being all the gifts of God to him, and that not in a way of common providence, whereby other kings reign, but by a peculiar deputation, and special decree, in a mighty affection, whereby he as it were takes him by the hand and sets him upon his throne; *Sit thou at my right hand, Psal. 110. 1*; and peculiarly calls him, *His King, Psal. 2. 6*, makes him higher than the heavens, gives him, by inheritance, a more excellent name than all the angels; all which are peculiarly the acts of God towards him, *Heb. 1. 8, 13*, the special orders of God concerning him.

2. In regard of *fitness for this government.* The spirit of counsel and might did rest upon him for the exercise of this government, as well as for his other transactions in the world; that he might *reprove with equity, smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips slay the wicked, Isa. 11. 4.* Righteousness was to be the *girdle of his loins*, and *faithfulness the girdle of his reins.* This was his

* Mr. Joseph Mede.

excellency, conferred upon him as king of the church, he had *seven horns*, a full power, and *seven eyes*, a perfect wisdom, for the management of the government, *Rev. 5. 6.* He had need of the highest fitness, because this government upon his shoulders was a charge incumbent upon him above what all the angels in heaven were intrusted with. He hath a spirit of wisdom to guide the church, a spirit of power to defend it, a spirit of faithfulness to take care of it, a spirit of compassion to pity it, and inexhaustible fulness to impart unto his people in all their necessities, able to fill the cistern, the church, and every private bucket. He was not without power to rescue those out of the hands of the devil by conquest, whom he had redeemed from the wrath of God by his death. He had full power given him to force the jailor, after he had contented the creditor; God fitted him with wisdom against the wiles of Satan, and might against this power.

3. In regard of *defence* and *protection* in it. He hath the whole power of the Godhead to defend him in it, he sits at his right hand: the right hand is a place of honour, and the right hand of a great king is a place of security, Though Christ hath a power to subdue his enemies, yet the Father is said to make his enemies his footstool. Putting forth his power, to show in the punishment of his enemies the high acceptance of his person and passion, that he will with his own hands bring down all that concur not with him in giving honour to his Son. The power which is essential to the Deity, is promised to be employed for the subduing his enemies under his sceptre and under his feet; *Till I make thy enemies thy footstool, Psal. 110. 1.* As he did bring him to his throne in spite of all opposition, so he will establish it against the storms and powers of hell.

He set him upon his throne with a mighty zeal for his honour, and indignation against his opposers. *Then shall he speak to them in his wrath, yet have I*

set my King upon my holy hill of Sion, Psal. 2. 5, 6, notwithstanding all their counsels against him, and resolutions to cast his cords from them. So *the increase of his government and peace*, the ordering of it, the stability of it with judgment and justice, and the perpetuity of it are settled, protected, and assured by the same zeal that placed him in it. *The zeal of the Lord of Hosts shall perform this, Isa. 9. 7 ; i. e.* that vehement love which he hath both to the honour of Christ, and the eternal peace and security of his seed. The power of God first lifted him to his throne, and the same omnipotency will keep it from being shaken by the powers of darkness. And the Redeemer was still to exercise faith in God as his Father, as *his God, the rock of his salvation*, even when he had *set his hand in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers, Psal. 89. 25, 26.* Then God doth promise to beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him, and his seed he would make *to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven*, ver. 23, 29.

Secondly. The Father did this *upon the account of his death*, and to show his high valuation of it, and that reconciliation he wrought by it.

This exaltation and dominion was upon the account of *his reconciling death*. His sufferings were the way to his crown; he first surrendered himself as our security to the justice of God, before God surrendered his power to the management of Christ for the good of man; *He died and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord of the living and the dead, Rom. 14. 9;* he obtained a new state of life, not to die again, as Lazarus; and he was not raised barely to a life, but to a royal and princely life, to have an extensive dominion over all, the foundation whereof was laid in his death. God *lifted up his head*, because he did *drink of the brook in the way, Psal. 110. 7 ;* and it was as he was a Lamb that had been slain as a sacrifice, that he had both his power and his wisdom, *Rev. 5. 6.*

1. The exercise of his dominion before his incar-

nation did in order of nature presuppose his death. Though he exercised a power in the world before his incarnation, yet it was exercised by him as constituted Mediator; and his assumption of a mortal body, and offering it up to death, was the condition required at the first constitution of him as Mediator, as a reparation of the honour of God which had been violated in the disorder of the first form of government, by the entrance of sin. As soon as ever man fell, the government of the world devolved into the hands of Christ, by virtue of the covenant between the Father and himself. When sin had undermined the pillars of the world, they would have fallen, had he not given a new consistency to them, *Col. 1. 17,* and *upheld all things by the word of his power, Heb. 1. 3,* and *established the earth, Isa. 49. 8,* which else would have been overthrown by justice, as well as the angels. Had not the government of the world been put into the hands of Christ, and a covenant of grace been erected, the world had been destroyed; the holiness of God could not have endured the sinfulness of it, and the justice of God could not have endured the standing of it according to the covenant of works.

And this government was not put into the hands of the Mediator, but upon a supposition of his death. What reason have we to think that God should constitute a new mode of government without a reparation of his honour in the first? *The government was upon his shoulders* when he was first given to us as a Son, *Isa. 9. 6.* He was given to us in promise, before he was given to us in the flesh; and in that first promise, wherein his power is ensured to him for us, viz. the *bruising the serpent's head*, his death is supposed by the serpent's *bruising his heel, Gen. 3. 15.* He was a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, and it was upon this presupposed oblation, that the world had its standing, that any had grace bestowed upon them, and found acceptance with God. If the great end of the government he is

since his death invested with, was performed by him before his incarnation, viz, the salvation of souls, yet with respect to his future death, then the government also, which was but a means in order to this, was conditionally conferred upon him. As believers were saved before his coming, so the world was governed by him, because he was to die.

Hence he was the angel of the Lord, in delivering his church; the *captain of the Lord of hosts*, in fighting their battles, *Josh. 5. 14*; the guardian of the church, and an advocate for them in their distresses, *Zech. 1. 8, 12*, and attended upon his throne with all the angels as messengers to perform his will, *Isa. 6. 1, 2*, which in the evangelist's interpretation was the Lord Jesus, whose glory Isaiah saw, *John 12. 41*, when the seraphims celebrated his glory in the earth: it was he, the foundation of whose glory was laid in the earth in the redemption of the sons of men; they are silent of that glory God hath in the vast heavens, and speak only of his glory in the small point of earth, which relates to that of his mediation, wherein the establishing the earth and reducing it to a due order was the main concern.

2. He was *absolutely confirmed in it* upon his death. There was a confirmation of it in the first instant of his conception, for he was made Lord when he was made Christ: at his birth he was proclaimed by the angels, a Lord, as well as a Saviour, *Luke 2. 11*. But his full investiture was after his death, upon his ascension, when seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high. David had an authority conferred upon him at his anointing, but was not fully inaugurated, till his coronation at Hebron. So after the Redeemer had finished his ministerial work, God fixed him in his royal dignity, to exercise his power, not only in the divine nature, as he had done before, but also in his human nature assumed by it. There was an *anointing* of him after his *bringing in everlasting righteousness* by his death, and *making a reconcilia-*

tion for iniquity, making *an end of sin, and sealing up the vision and prophecy* which centred in him; then was the Most Holy to be anointed, and have his solemn investiture, *Dan. 9. 24.* Because of that illustrious holiness, he had manifested in the whole course of his humiliation, and that signal obedience upon the cross, he then was settled an high priest for ever, which he exercises by himself; a Prophet of his church, which he exercises by his Spirit; an everlasting King, which he manages partly by his Spirit, partly by himself.

Thus our Noah was brought out of the ark, after the suffering the terror of a deluge, to be the father of a second world; and as Isaac was raised up, after he had appeared as a victim under his father's sword, to be the father of many nations. He was to be Shiloh, a peace-maker, before the gathering of the nations under his sceptre, *Gen. 49. 10.* And the Son of man, before he was to have a *dominion that should not pass away*, *Dan. 7. 13, 14.* As God brought him again from the dead, *through the blood of the everlasting covenant*; he raised him because his blood was a covenant blood, *Heb. 13, 20*: so by his own blood he entered once into *the holy place*, *Heb. 9. 12.* But it was not only after his death, but because it was a death for man voluntarily submitted unto. The conquests made by him in the world, his having a *portion divided with the great*, and the *spoil with the strong*, was because he *poured out his soul to death, made intercession for the transgressors, and bare the sins of many*, *Isa. 53. 12.* It was upon this score of purging and expiating our sins by himself, that he *sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*, *Heb. 1. 3.*

He expiated sin by the oblation of himself, not as other high priests by the blood of * animals. If any creature had been offered by him, though held in the highest rank in the creation, the priest had been infinite, but the sacrifice had been finite. But it was

* Mestrezat in locum.

himself which he offered, a finite, human nature, in conjunction with an infinite person, and that for the atonement of our iniquity ; for which infinite obedience, and infinite charity, God rewarded him with an infinite exaltation. It was his own blood which procured his admission into the holy place, and he was crowned because he had combated with the curses of the law, and enemies of our peace, and conquered them for us.

There are two things requisite to the exercise of this power and dominion, the knowledge of God's decrees, and authority over the chief ministers in the execution of them ; both which Christ hath upon the account of his reconciling death :

1. *The knowledge of God's decrees.* God gave to him the knowledge of his decrees concerning his people, *Rev. 1. 1.* No man on the earth, or angel in heaven, was found *worthy to open the book*, i. e. to be acquainted with the contents thereof, nor to *unloose the seals*, to dive into the depth and mysteries of his counsels and providence, but only *the Lion of the tribe of Judah* ; but it was by virtue of his death (as he was the Lamb slain, the antitype of the legal lambs sacrificed) that he took the *book and opened it*, *Rev. 5. 6, 7.* The prevalency of his death with his Father, was the cause of the knowledge of all the secrets of his will. As he was *the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and the root of David*, as he had taken human nature according to the will of his Father, and suffered in it ; he prevailed to open the book and *unloose the seals thereof*, *Rev. 5. 5* ; that they should not be concealed from him, who was the head of the reconciled world. When the justice of God was appeased by the prevailing death of Christ, he gives forth willingly whatsoever may conduce to the salvation of his people ; and in order to this, there was a necessity Christ should understand his secrets. How else could he be an executor of all the counsels of God ? This revelation is to him as Mediator in his human nature, as ap-

pointed king by God, which is distinct from that knowledge he had as God, as his mediatory kingdom was distinct from that essential kingdom he had as God; as that was a delegated power, so this is a revealed knowledge; and both one and the other he had, as he was the Lamb of God taking away the sins of the world.

2. *Authority over the chief ministers* employed in the execution of his will. *Things in heaven must bow down to him, Phil. 2. 10. All power in heaven, as well as on earth, was given him, Mat. 28. 18,* and nothing was exempt from his jurisdiction, but only the Father who did put all things under him, 1 Cor. 15. 27. The innumerable company of angels, which are citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem and Mount Sion, the seat of his royalty, Heb. 12. 22, are under his sceptre. His sitting on the right hand of God (as was said) was because he purged our sins by himself, and whatsoever did accrue to him by virtue of this session, was upon the same foundation with the session itself. Part of that dominion accruing to him, as sitting at the right hand of God, was the power over angels; *Who is on the right hand of God, angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject to him, 1 Pet. 3. 22,* who had authority and power from God in the administration of his providence either among other angels or among men; they were subjected to him, i. e. by his Father. He was passive in it, and had it conferred upon him as part of his mediatory glory. As God, he did himself subject the angels to him. Thus, as an honour for the oblation of himself, were they all marshalled under the power of Christ, by the Father, who had power to dispose of his creatures under the reins of what government he pleased.

And the most excellent orders of them were not exempt from this subjection, but every person to whom God had granted a principality, power, might, and dominion, either in this world, or that which is to come, was brought under his sceptre, to be serviceable

to him in the execution of those designs he had for the church, which he had reconciled to God by his blood ; *Far above all principality and power*, *Eph.* 1. 21, not only ἄνω, but ὑπεράνω, exceedingly above in excellency of dignity, and largeness of authority. Whence they are called his angels, *Rev.* 1. 1. And fellow-servants of *those that have the testimony of Jesus*, *Rev.* 19. 20, and therefore servants to Christ as Mediator. And as a testimony of this subjection of them, God sent all his angels to wait upon him at his triumphant reception, as his chariots, to convey the human nature of Christ to heaven, and to welcome him after his victory ; he was *among them as in Sinai*, *Psal.* 68. 17, when he came down to give the law ; he was the commander of them, and gave them directions in that affair ; this is spoken with respect to his ascension, as it follows, *Thou hast ascended on high*, ver. 18 ; they attended him to his throne, and waited upon him, to be employed in the execution of his royal edicts. Now this adoration which the angels are commanded to render him, was because he had expiated sin, *Heb.* 1. 3, 6. Their waiting about his throne to attend his pleasure, and the joyful acclamations they shout forth in his praise, is because he was the *Lamb slain* ; the reconciling sacrifice, whereby God and man were brought together, *Rev.* 5. 11, 12.

Thirdly. It was *very fit and congruous* that he should have this glory. This was the agreement between the Father and the Son before he set a foot out of heaven. He had glorified God, had given him a foundation, by his submission to the sharpness of his mediatory work, to display his wisdom in the highest glory, his justice in the deepest severity, his mercy with the clearest lustre, his veracity in the firmest stability ; without his undertaking this, none of those attributes could have appeared in such glory upon any other foundation : they could never have been thus manifested by any creature, or the undertaking of the

whole creation. As he therefore glorified the Father more than all creatures could glorify him, so it was fit he should have a glory transcendently above them. As he had improved his talents above them, so he should be possessed with a rule above them. Without this power he could not have conducted those whom he had purchased to a blessed eternity. It was very reasonable, that as the Father had by him done the hardest work, viz. the expiating sin, he should also by him work the full accomplishment of it.

It was congruous that things should be given into the hands of the Redeemer to manage, who had purchased all by a price so valuable as that of his death. If he died to purchase them, it was fit he should have authority to perfect them. He being a divine sacrifice, was of infinite price ; and as his sufferings surpassed the punishments of all creatures, so the value of his sacrifice exceeded the riches of the whole creation, both of heaven and earth, angels or men. He had not had a reward commensurate to the value of his death, had not a dominion been added to him as Mediator, beside that of his Deity, which was his by nature, and could not fall within the compass of a purchase, since he never was, nor could be dispossessed of it. It was but reason the angels should be subjected to him, who had been preserved and confirmed by him. For God had in him *gathered together things in heaven as well as things in earth*, Eph. 1. 10, which collection would have signified little, unless by it they had been wrapped up into a permanent state, and a full assurance from any danger of apostacy from God, and a fall into misery, as some of their fellows had done. It was very proper that they who had received so great a benefit by him, should be subject to him ; that they who had been gathered under his wing, should be as well under his sceptre.

Besides, as he had discovered himself faithful to death, against some reluctance of human nature, he should have an opportunity to discover himself faithful

in the other parts which concerned the honour of God; he that was faithful to him under the curse of the law, would not be unfaithful to him under the blessing of deliverance. And very fit at last that he that was the innocent sufferer, should be the judge of his guilty enemies, and condemn the great head of that enmity which was the occasion of his conflict with his Father's wrath, to remove it out of the way. As he being rich in the Deity, and in the form of God, *became poor* in his humanity and in the form of a servant; eclipsing thereby the glory of his Godhead, it was fit he should re-assume his former state as the heir of all things, and exercise that power in his humanity, which he had a right unto in his Deity.

Fourthly. This power was conferred on him for the *application and perfection of the fruits of reconciliation.* This power and dominion is given to him for the advantage and full growth of his seed. When his people shall be perfected, and his enemies subdued, the government devolves wholly to his Father, there being no longer any occasion for the exercise of this mediatory dominion. If it were conferred upon him only for himself, the power would not cease as long as his person endures. But the cessation of it upon the accomplishment of such effects, evidences that those effects were the end for which it was first conferred. It is upon this score the scripture places the extent of his dominion; *He, i. e. the Father, hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Eph. 1. 22.* For the church's welfare, for the good of the subjects, as well as the glory of his empire. He is the king of saints, to rule them by his grace; and the king of nations, to rule them by his providence. He is set to reign in *Sion, the hill of holiness, Psal. 2. 6,* as the centre of all the power and wisdom of his government; as the chief city of a prince partakes most of the fruits of his valour in conquering, and his wisdom in ruling. As his pro-

phetical office is not to cease till instruction be swallowed up in vision, nor his priestly till his intercession be succeeded by immediate communion, so neither his kingly till there be a total cessation from all danger, and not an enemy left to disturb their peace.

1. For the *bestowing gifts* on men for the publishing this reconciliation. He received gifts at his triumph, that he might, as a royal steward of his Father, distribute them for the good of those that had been rebels to the government of God, to fit them for the great fruit of this peace, viz. a communion between God and them; *That the Lord God might dwell among them, Psal. 68. 18; Eph. 4. 8, 11, 12, 13.* These gifts come from God as a God of salvation, as the doxology infers, *Blessed be the Lord who daily loads us with his benefits, even the God of our salvation, Psal. 68. 19.* The intent whereof was to wound the head of the enemy Satan, who had been the first makebate; *God shall wound the head of his enemy, Psal. 68. 21.* The Spirit therefore was not given in that eminency and fulness of gifts and graces, till the glorification of Christ, wherein he absolutely received the keys of all the treasures of his Father, as well as the keys of hell and death; *The Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified, John 7. 39.*

(The giving the Spirit depended on the glorification of him as Jesus a Saviour. God would reserve those gifts for the triumphal coronation of his Son, as an evidence of the peace which was made by him, by the effusion of the richest treasures of God. The Spirit was in the world before, as light was upon the face of the creation the three first days, but not so glorious, sparkling, and darting out full beams till the fourth day, the day of the creation of the sun, and fixing it in the heavens; so was the rich beaming forth of light, when after four thousand years, the fourth divine day, the sun of righteousness was seated

in the heavens to disperse his beams. The first edict he gave out, after the receipt of his power, was the commission for preaching the gospel; *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go therefore and teach all nations, Matt. 28. 18, 19.* It was the intention of his Father, that he should dispose of his power for this end; for he who did all things according to his Father's will, would not use his power in the least, but for those ends for which it was conferred upon him.

2. For the *inviting* of men to an acceptance of him. As the most beneficial commands that ever he gave, so the most condescending affections he ever discovered, the most gracious invitations that ever he made, were at those times where he had a sense of this power in a more peculiar manner, to show the proper intendment of it, and to what ends he was to manage it. The grant of this power is the foundation of that invitation he makes to weary souls; *All things are delivered to me of my Father*, the inference is, *Come unto me, all ye that labour, Matt. 11. 27.* And his governing them as a leader and commander to the people, is the encouragement God uses to men to accept of that rich and liberal invitation of coming *to the waters, and buying wine and milk without money and without price, Isa. 55. 1, 4.* God exalted him to all his power, to enable him to make the most gracious offers to men, and encourage their acceptance of him, as himself intimates in that fore-mentioned, *Matt. 11. 27*, that the delivery of all his treasures to him, was to make a revelation of his Father to the sons of men.

3. For the *preserving* the reconciliation for ever firm. As there is an increase of his government, so there is an increase of his peace; *Of the increase of his government and peace there is no end.* His government, and the peace he purchased, go hand in hand; as his glory rises to the meridian, so does the reconciliation. He therefore went to heaven to *purify the*

heavenly things themselves with his sacrifice, Heb. 9. 23; i. e. say some, heaven itself, which in some sense was polluted by the stench of our sins, coming up into the presence of God, into which Christ as the high priest entered with his blood, to settle the sweet savour of that before God, instead of the loathsome savour of our sins, which had offended his majesty. But howsoever, this exaltation was, that he might appear in the presence of God for us, Heb. 9. 24, and preserve by his intercession, what he wrought by his passion. He hath therefore his head encircled with a rainbow, Rev. 10. 1, to evidence the perfection of the peace he had made, and the establishment of the security in heaven, against the opening any more the flood-gates of wrath for an overflowing deluge.

4. For the *subduing* his and our enemies. He is to continue in the exercise of this power, *till all the enemies be put under his feet, 1 Cor. 15. 25.* All the enemies, all the enemies to him as God, all the enemies to him as Mediator, all the enemies to the great design of his mediation, all the enemies to him in that state and condition wherein he sits at the right hand of God, which is as Mediator, and therefore whatsoever is contrary to his mediation and the intendment of it, all those enemies to his members which would hinder their arrival at happiness, and their blessed conjunction with their head, are to be destroyed.

And those are, 1. *Sin*, which hath *reigned unto death, Rom. 5. 21.* 2. *Satan*, who as a prince hath reigned in the world, and kept up sin in its vigour, *John 12. 31.* 3. *Death*, the last enemy, which hath reigned from Adam to Moses, *Rom. 5. 14,* and *will reign to the end of the world, 1 Cor. 15. 26.* Whatsoever sets itself in contrariety to the happiness of believers, is an enemy to the design of Christ, and is to be put under his feet, as one end of the authority granted to him. All the powers of hell must be

crushed, all the fortifications of the devil must be demolished, and himself despoiled of his arms. This was necessary, that his kingdom should extend over the devils to repress them, if it did extend over his subjects to secure them; these could not be advanced by his mercy, if the others did not sink under his power.

5. For the *perfect salvation of his seed*. His exaltation was for the perfection and perpetuity of salvation, the apostle's inference else would have no validity, *It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Rom. 8. 34.* But the apostle sets forth the eternal knot between him and believers, upon his session at the right hand of God, with a *rather*. *God exalted him to be a prince and a Saviour, Acts 5. 31.* A princely Saviour, to bestow the royal gifts of repentance and forgiveness of sins. As he appointed Christ to give it, so he hath appointed men to attain it by him, and from him, *1 Thess. 5. 9.* As he merited salvation by his death, he might perfect it *by his life, Rom. 5. 10.* That as his death was by the ordination of God to purchase a seed, so his exaltation was, by the like designation, for a full sanctification of this seed, that he might at last behold them in their perfect glory; and therefore what he thought his proper work, upon a sense of it in his soul, when he considered his divine original, and his approaching glory, when yet it was not absolutely conferred upon him, *John 13. 3, 4,* he will think his work, when he is in full possession of it, viz. the full sanctification of his people, the washing their souls, which was symbolically signified by the washing their feet: What seems to be the end of that present sense, will much more be the end and issue of his enjoyment. As he was humbled to save them, so he was exalted to perfect them: and since he was made sin for us in his death, he is in his advancement *made wisdom,*

righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, a full treasury to supply all our necessities; that as he was the author, so he might be the finisher of our faith. If God delivered to him the full contents of his will, because he was a *Lamb slain*, it must be in order to carry on that work for which he was slain; to perfect an eternal amity between God and them, that there might be an eternal rejoicing in one another. The Mediator being to reign till the whole church be brought to heaven, the intendment therefore of his heavenly royalty, is the perfection of them in an heavenly glory. That as in his humiliation he was the way of our access, as by his Spirit he was the discoverer of the truth, so by his life he might be the perfecter of our happiness; *I am the way, the truth, and the life, John 14. 6.* As he glorified his Father on the earth, by a full satisfaction of his justice, so his Father glorified him in heaven, to make a full application of his merits, *John 17. 1, 2.*

Fifthly. By this the Father testifies the *highest acceptance of his person*, and the sufficiency of his death; *The Father loves the Son, and hath given all things into his hand, John 3. 35.* His coronation testifies the acceptation of his person, and it being after his death, testifies the acceptation of his passion. As Pharaoh's elevating Joseph from a prison, to the highest dignity in Egypt, next to that of the sovereign, was a testimony of that king's high admiration of Joseph's wisdom. This acceptance is testified by two things. 1. The manner of his reception and settlement. 2. The nature of his power.

1. The *manner* of his reception and settlement. It was with an infinitely pleased countenance, and all the marks of joy in the soul of God, which rejoiced him more than the crown of pure gold set upon his head, or the length of days for ever and ever granted to him. The psalmist placeth all the joy of Christ upon his ascension in this; *Thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance, Psa.*

21. 3, 4, 5, 6, בשמחה חרה ; thou hast made him glad with joy. One frown in the face of God would have damped all the joy of Christ. The psalm was anciently understood of the ascension and glory of Christ, and Ainsworth makes a pretty observation of the word rejoice, ישמח, by transposition to be משיח, Messiah. If there be joy in heaven at the return of sinners, how great was the joy of God at the return of the Saviour of them, after the performing unto God so eminent a service? How heartily did the Father take him in his arms? How straightly did he embrace him? How magnificently did he fix him in a throne of immortality and advocacy? And when he did thus constitute him his King upon his holy hill, he established his throne and the perpetuity of his kingdom by an oath; *Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David, his seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me, Psa. 89. 35, 36.* What men are mightily pleased with, they confirm under the highest obligations. As when the daughter of Herodias pleased Herod, he confirms by an oath the grant he had made of whatsoever she should ask him, *Mark 6. 22, 23.* And the solemnity of Christ's entrance into heaven, and sitting upon his throne, lasted ten days before the sending of the Spirit as the first fruits of his purchase.

2. The *nature* of that glory and power invested in him. It is not the orbs of the planets, or the starry heaven, where Christ hath taken up his residence, but he is mounted above all the visible heavens; *Far above all heavens, Eph. 4. 10*; *ὑπεράνω*, not *άνω*, exceedingly above the heavens; into the holy of holies, the habitation of the glorious Majesty of God; a place of purity for a pure Redeemer, a place of glory for a glorious Mediator. And he is seated in his humanity in the highest place of heaven next the Father, at the right hand of his Majesty on high; *Yea, in the midst of his throne, Rev. 7. 17,* an honour

never allowed to the highest angels, *Heb.* 1. 13, which stand before the throne of God, but sit not in the throne with him. The obedience of angels never did, never could equal the obedience of the Son of God. His empire is of the same extent with his Father's; so highly did his Father value his expiatory offering, that he would not exempt an angel in heaven, nor a devil in hell, nor any creature upon earth, from a subjection to him; but poured the whole rule and government into his hands, ordered the same worship to be performed to the Son as to himself, *John* 5. 23. And that *in heaven*, *Heb.* 1. 6. *Rev.* 5. 13.

And for duration it is *for ever and ever*; he is to reign as Mediator, till all the ends of it be accomplished; and afterwards for ever with the Father, in the glory of the * Deity, *Heb.* 1. 3. He is to reign as Mediator in the place of the Father, till the church be perfected, by reducing all enemies to an entire subjection, and then to resign his power to his Father. As the son of a king, sent to reduce rebellious countries to obedience, hath a royal commission from his Father to act as king, an authority to pardon or punish, till his conquest be finished: so when Christ shall have gained the full victory, he shall cease his mediation, and God shall reign immediately over all, and Christ shall reign with him, not as Mediator, but as God. *God shall be all in all*, *1 Cor.* 15. 28, which is opposed to Christ's interposition or intercession as Mediator; there will be no need of God's communicating himself by a Mediator, but he will immediately shine forth upon them, when the fruits of sin, and sin itself, is abolished in them.

But for the Father to resign things to the management of his Son, as the Son had given himself up to the justice of the Father, in a sort to eclipse his own glory for so long a time, as the Son had eclipsed his Deity in his humiliation, and, as it were, lay by the

immediate exercise of his authority of judging and governing, which originally pertains to him, and veil it, to let the beams of it shoot into the world only through this medium, is such a mark of his acceptance, that higher cannot be given. It cannot be conceived how the Father should do more than this, for a testimony of his pleasure in him and his sacrifice. It is impossible the Father should dethrone himself; and therefore any thing higher than what he hath done, cannot be imagined. For though the authority still resides in the Father, and is extant in every act of Christ's government, yet he acts not immediately, receives no addresses immediately to himself, but all in and by his glorified Son. Had he had the least displeasure with him, or found the least blemish in him, he had not lodged the exercise of his power in him.

First. From hence we see, that the exaltation of Christ by the Father is a mighty *encouragement to faith* in Christ.

1. Hereby we have assurance, that all that Christ spake and did, was *agreeable to the will of the Father*. This exaltation of Christ will not suffer us to think that any thing was left undone by him, which he ought to have done. Otherwise the exact justice of God would never have consented to have put the government of all things into his hand; an exact obedience was to precede, before a glory was to be conferred. Since therefore this glory is conferred, it is evident his obedience was unblemished. All the world, and the concerns of it, would never have been laid upon his shoulders, had the piercing eye of the Father discerned any fault in it. The infinite wisdom of God would never have intrusted him with so great an affair, if he had not been faithful in the management of what had been before committed to him; because if he had been unfaithful in one, there was no ground to think he would be faithful in the others. But it is a strong argument, that he will be exact in the glorious part of his charge, since he hath been exact in

the ignominious part of his work. It is upon the account of his being a *faithful witness*, that he is the *Prince of the kings of the earth*, *Rev. 1. 5*. It is this argument the Spirit uses to *convince* the world of *righteousness*, i. e. the righteousness of his person, the righteousness of his mediation, that there is a full expiation of sin, because he is entertained and received by the Father, *John 16. 10*.

2. Hereby we have assurance, that it is the intent of the Father, that all things should be managed by Christ *for the good of those that believe in him*. Since he hath delivered the book to Christ, containing the secrets of his will, because he was a Lamb slain, it is evident, that it is the pleasure of the Father, that his government shall be for those ends for which he was slain; and that the book contains the will of God, pursuant to the ends of that death. Had that book contained any thing contrary to those ends, and to the interest of his people, the Father would not have delivered it into his hands. The end of his exaltation can never cross the end of his passion; nor could the unchangeable love of the Father give him rules for his acting in his government, opposite to those he had designed his humiliation for.

Since therefore he was in Christ upon the cross, reconciling the world to himself, he is in Christ, upon his throne, pursuing the ends of that reconciliation, and bringing the fruits of it to a glorious maturity, by the glorification of the Reconciler. How soon were the tears of John dried up, when he looked upon Christ opening the book of God's decrees, and found by the praises of the elders, that the world was committed to him, to order all things for the good of the church, *Rev. 5. 4, 5*. What encouragement would they else have had to have fallen down, singing the praises of him, and acknowledging him as their Lord and King, and to present to him their golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints? The first homage he receives, after his open-

ing the book, and that as a pleasant odour, is the prayers of believers. *And when he had taken the book, the four beasts, and twenty four elders, fell down before the Lamb; having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints,* ver. 8; which evidences their good to be the intendment of the Father, in delivering it to him; and that the rules in it were to that purpose, and his own resolution to observe the rules of it.

3. It is to be considered, *who this person is*, that is thus exalted, in order to the encouragement of faith. It is the same person, in whose humiliation the Father was reconciling us; our kinsman, by the assumption of our nature, but more by the relation of our faith to him, into whose hand this power is put. He is made the steward to dispense his Father's gifts, who knew our indigencies and wants of them, and whose tenderness cannot be questioned, since he hath had an experience of our infirmities. He that shed his blood to save us, will not spare his power to relieve us. As he had not died, but to reconcile us; so he would not have been exalted as a Reconciler, but to perfect it by bringing us to the Father: by the one he made way for our access, and by the other for our perfect conjunction. His being quickened by the Spirit, and the glory following thereupon, as well as his being put to death in the flesh, was to *bring us to God*, 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. He hath a tenderness as he is the Son of God, partaking of the same nature with his Father; he hath a tenderness as our Mediator, and clothed with our flesh; he hath also an engagement of faithfulness, since all the treasures of heaven are put into his hands, to be expended for those ends for which he died. He is not only administrator of his Father's goods, but guardian of the souls committed to him by his Father, and faithful he is in both.

How may we then cast our souls upon this foundation, since the directions he receives from the Father, are agreeable to all the former œconomy! Since as

a Lamb slain, he is God's steward to distribute ; since both his heart and the heart of his Father are so full of love, one in the execution, the other in the acceptance, nothing can be cross to the interest of those, for whom the one died, and the other accepted it. No higher ground can there be of faith, than the love the Father hath shown to our Redeemer for his reconciling passion, by his glorious exaltation. He loved him in the *laying down his life, and he loved him in the taking it again, John 10. 17.* Get your thoughts then up into heaven. Behold the Father taking him up in his arms, congratulating his victory, adorning his triumph, conferring upon him, and perpetuating a government. See if in all this you can find a frown on God's face ; any doubt in his heart of the validity of his sacrifice : see if any letters, but those of grace, be written about his throne.

And if God has no doubt of it, who is more concerned in his glory, than you in your salvation, why should any jealousies remain in any heart that accepts him, discards all affection to sin, and endeavours to imitate him in an holy obedience to God ? *Be followers therefore of God as dear children, since he hath so magnificently entertained his Son, upon the account of what he did, for all that will believe in him.* And wait upon God till he shall send his Son in all his royal attire, to bring you to the full enjoyment of all the fruits of this reconciliation, so strongly wrought and so heartily accepted. And till that be accomplished, let hope every day pierce through the veil, and enter into that what which is within it, more inward ; *εἰς τὸ ἐσώτερον τῆ καταπετάσματος, Inning our souls by faith and hope every day in the veil, Heb. 6. 19.* This faith is a firm anchor to hold the soul safe in all storms, and the Father's admission of Christ into heaven is the rock on which it should fasten.

Secondly. What comfort may be derived from this subject.

1. Sin is *fully expiated*. Since it is upon the account of the expiation of it, that he is thus dignified. The purging of our sins by himself, hath met not only with a bare acceptation, but an high valuation with the Father. Since he hath thus crowned and enthroned him, what assurance have we of the full atonement by the blood of his cross! How can we doubt the full satisfaction, delight, and content of the Father with him, and with us, upon the condition of faith, since it was for the purging not his own, but our sins that he did *sit down, as of right, on the right hand of the throne of the majesty on high?* Heb. 1. 3. The gratifications the Father made to our Redeemer, manifest the satisfaction of his justice, since not only God's kindness, but his justice, which is a part of his majesty, was employed in the welcome reception of him. Had that frowned, there had been no throne for him to sit on; and if it ever frowned upon him, his throne will shake under him. But it never shall, for it is a *throne for ever and ever*, and that because his sceptre, is a sceptre of righteousness, Heb. 1. 8. A majesty still offended, would never have admitted him to this honour. Is there any room for sorrow and dejection, for jealousies of the sufficiency of the ransom, after so illustrious a discharge from the Father?

2. Accusations shall be *answered*. We have great enemies; the devils that tempt us, our corruptions that haunt us, and both to accuse us. To whom must they accuse us? To that Majesty, at whose right hand Christ hath his residence. Whence must the vengeance they call for issue, but from that Majesty upon whose throne Christ sits as a *Lamb slain*, who sits ready to answer the accusations, and stop the revenge? He tore Satan's charge upon the cross, will he let it be pieced together in his triumph? As he bowed down his head upon the cross to expiate our sins, so his head is lifted upon the throne to obviate any charge they can bring against us. Satan knows

it is fruitless for him to bring his indictment there, where Christ perpetually appears, and is never out of the way.

The perpetuity of our justification, results from this sitting of Christ at the right hand of God; for he sits there, not as an useless spectator, but an industrious and powerful intercessor to keep up a perpetual amity, and prevent sin from making any new breach. Sin we must not, but *if any man sin*, (not a course of sin, but fall by some temptation) *we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*, 1 John 2. 1. He sits as an advocate, as a reconciler, and a propitiation for sin, spreading before his Father, the odours of his merits and righteousness, to answer the charge and indictments of sin. *He appears in the presence of God for us*, Heb. 9. 24, before the face of his glory in the highest heavens. It was through the blood of the covenant he arose, it was through and with the blood of the covenant he entered into the holy place, to carry the merit of his death, as a standing monument into heaven.

God, by his advancement, would have the sight of it always in his eye, and the savour of it in his nostrils; that as the world, after the savour of Noah's sacrifice, should no more sink under the deluge: so the believers in Christ should no more groan under the curses of the law, though they may, in this world, smart under the corrections of a Father. It is a mighty comfort in the midst of all infirmities, where there is the answer of a good conscience towards God, that Christ is gone to heaven, and is on the right hand of God to save those that are baptized into his death, and that have have the *stipulation of a good conscience towards God*, which is the apostle's reasoning, 1 Pet. 3. 21, 22, *ἐπεὶ ὁ ἁγῶς*.

3. Wants shall be *relieved*. It is that human nature wherein the expiation was made on earth, which is crowned with glory in heaven by the Father: that human nature, with all the compassions inherent in

it, with the same affections wherewith he endured the cross, and despised the shame, with the same earnestness to relieve them, as he had to deliver them. With the same desire to drink of the fruit of the vine with them in the kingdom, as he had to eat the passover, with them upon the earth; to supply their wants, as he had redeemed their persons. If the *free gift of all things*, be argued from the Father's delivery of the Son to death, *Rom. 8. 32*; the full distribution of all things may be expected from the Father's setting him upon his throne, and giving him the keys of death and hell to stop their inroads upon a believer, and the command of his treasures to dispense at his pleasure: what can be denied to the merit of his death, since as our surety he is established in an eternal throne? Since he was admitted as a *forerunner for us*, *Heb. 6. 20*, *πρόδρομος*, what can there be necessary for us in our journey, till we overtake him, that we may not expect at his and the Father's hands? All our needs will be supplied, since there are *riches in glory*, in Jesus Christ, *Phil. 4. 19*.

4. Spiritual enemies shall be *conquered*. All enemies are to be made his footstool, *Psa. 110. 1*. Satan, who was wounded by him upon the cross, shall not rise, since he is upon the throne. He that could not overpower him while he was covered with the infirmities of our flesh, cannot master him since all power is delivered to him in heaven and earth, and the keys of hell put into his hands. He bruised him while he was known only to be the seed of the woman, and bruised him for us; and shall he be able to repair his broken strength, since his conqueror is now declared to be the Son of God with power? Our inward enemies shall fall under the same might. It was the purpose of the Father to *conform his elect to the glorious image of his Son*, *Rom. 8. 29*. What hath Christ this power in his hands for, but to destroy the power of that in the heart, the guilt whereof he expiated by his blood? that as he appeased the anger of God, and

vindicated the honour of his law by removing the guilt, so he may fully content the holiness of God by cleansing out the filth,

As he had a body prepared him to effect *the one*, so he hath a power given him to perfect *the other*; that as there is no guilt to provoke his justice, there may be no dirt to offend his holiness. That as the Father hath been reconciled by the death of Christ, he may delight himself in the soul by the operation of the power of Christ. This will be accomplished. The first fruit of his exaltation, was the mission of the Spirit, whose proper title is a Spirit of holiness, in regard of his operation, as well as his nature; and whose proper work is to quicken the soul to a newness of life, and mortify by grace the enemies of our nature.

The apostle assures the believing Thessalonians of it, from this argument, of his being a God of peace; *The very God of peace sanctify you wholly*, 1 Thess. 5. 23, *ἀντὸς ὁ θεὸς*. That God of peace, ver. 24, *Faithful is he that calls you, who also will do it*. It is not only a petition, but an assurance; as appears by ver. 24, that it will be done by him as the author of reconciliation. And completely done, *ὁλοτελεῖς*, wholly perfect, universally for the subject, in understanding, will, affections, body; *In spirit, and soul, and body*. The enmity else would not be taken away; as the enmity is removed from God in the satisfaction of his justice, by the blood of his Son; so the enmity shall be removed from a believer, in the renovation of his image by the grace of his Spirit, that there may be at last no disgusts on either side; for *he is faithful who hath called you*. He is not a God of peace for a day or an hour; it is not an imperfect reconciliation he designed: it is a faithfulness to himself, to his own resolves, to his own honour, to his Son's blood, to the call of his people. And this is a good argument to plead in our prayers for sanctification, since God

hath manifested himself to be a God of peace in the raising Christ, accepting him, exalting him; all which were evidences of a perfect reconciliation, that he *would perfect in you every good work, Heb. 13. 20, 21.*

Thirdly. As the Father's exaltation of Christ is comfortable to the believer, so it is *as terrible* to the unbeliever and unregenerate. He that advanced him to the throne, and conferred upon him a power of asking the *heathen for an inheritance*, confers also upon him a power of destroying his enemies; *Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, &c. and thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, Psa. 2: 8, 9.* The breaking refers to ask of me; and as thou shalt have blessings for believers, so thou shalt have wrath and judgment for unbelievers. Unbelievers that break his bands, and cast his cords far from them, are so far from having the benefit of Christ's intercessions for mercy in his glorified state, that they have a dreadful interest in his pleas for wrath. He hath a power of dashing them *like a potter's vessel* conferred upon him. He that gives Christ the whole world upon asking, will not contradict him in his severest acts against his unbelieving enemies. For that love to him that advanced him, as a Lamb slain, will spirit his wrath with a greater fury against undervaluers of his death and sufferings.

Will the Father, who upon his death thought him worthy to devolve the government of the world upon him, and to act all by the hand of his Son, take it well that he is not imitated by his creature? Is it not a reflection upon the Father, as if he had acted a weak part? Had set too high a value upon the death of the Son? That his eyes were too dim to pierce into the nature of it? Will God, who is pleased with him, bear with such real blasphemies against him? For so all unbelieving rejection of Christ is. Shall his obedience be so pleasant to God, and be unre-

venge, if it be unpleasant to us? Shall God subject the whole host of angels to him, and let worms despise him without severe punishment? If there be not an holy estimation of Christ, obedience to his will and laws, it will not consist with the Father's exaltation of him, to suffer the affront; or let his authority be an idle name, an authority without hands, an empty title; no, as he hath a sceptre of righteousness, so he hath an iron rod to bruise his enemies. What a folly is it to despise that Redeemer, wilfully to violate his laws, who hath all power given him in heaven and earth, and the power of judging committed to him by the Father? This is to dare the curses of the law, break open the store-house of his wrath, and be bent upon hell with violence.

Fourthly. Let us accept Christ then, *as our reconciler and our king*. God is not contented only with the establishment of him in this honour, but he loves to hear the world ring with acknowledgments of it; he will have *every tongue to confess to the glory of God the Father, that Jesus is the Lord; That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, Phil. 2. 11.* For the glory of God, who conducted him through this great undertaking, accepted him for it, and dignified him for bringing in *an everlasting righteousness*. The way to glorify God the Father, is to acknowledge the dignity of Christ, and to accept him for those ends for which the Father hath exalted him. All things are for the glory of God, but this more signally; hereby he hath discovered the wonders of his wisdom, justice, power, and love, before men and angels; and he that owns Christ as a glorified Mediator, owns God in the glory of all those perfections; without this acceptance of him, we cannot answer the end for which God hath exalted him; *He hath given him a name above every name*, that we might confess and acknowledge him as he hath declared him, and pay him a service by our faith. If we do

not render him a voluntary homage now, we shall be forced to render him an homage hereafter in a deplorable state.

Heartily to accept him for our Lord, is to perform a duty in fellowship with the angels which encompass his throne. Faith is a choice of Christ for head and governor, it is therefore expressed, *Hos. 11.* They shall appoint themselves one head, i. e. the Messiah, they shall believe in him. Christ is an head of God's appointing, and of believers' approving. God sets him as an head *authoritative*, and we should embrace him *voluntarie* and *obedientialiter*, freely and obediently. As the magistrate chooses a public officer, and the people consent to him, the magistrate gives him the authority, and the people encourage him in the exercise. God set his Son upon the holy hill of Sion, *Psal. 2. 6*; and we are commanded to kiss him, which is a token of acknowledgement, consent, and subjection. As he sits at the right hand of God, he ought to sit in the centre of our hearts. Since he is possessed of the highest place, and does not disdain the lowest, it is unworthy to keep him from it. Serve him as a Lord. As he hath made himself a *sacrifice for us, and rose again and revived*, *Rom. 14. 9*; i. e. acquired a new state of life, we should serve him as a living Lord, in obedience to the pleasure and authority of God the Father, who hath been in him reconciling the world, and for his work hath advanced him to the dominion over all creatures. As God exalted him out of a sense of what he had done for the appeasing his wrath, and the salvation of man, so should we exalt him in our hearts out of a sense of what he hath done for our souls. *He that honours not the Son, honours not the Father who hath sent him*, *John 5. 22, 23*, and who hath glorified him. For he contradicts the end for which God hath given all judgment to the Son.

Fifthly. Glorify God in Christ, glorify Christ. God is gone up with a shout; *God is gone up with a shout*,

the Lord with the sound of a trumpet : sing praises to God, sing praises ; sing praises to our king, sing praises, Psal. 47. 5 : alluding to the joy in the fetching up the ark, 1 Chron. 13. 8. There were shouts of angels at his entrance into heaven ; God reigns over the heathen, God sits upon the throne of his holiness ; a throne which his holy and righteous obedience purchased ; or the holiness of God is now gloriously apparent, fully vindicated. Glorify the Father for it : the Father and the Lamb are joined together in their praises ; Blessing, honour, glory, and power be unto him that sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever, Rev. 5. 13. As the Father hath enlarged his hand to Christ, as our reconciler, we should enlarge our hearts in thankfulness to him. God was not satisfied with giving a little mite to Christ, a small reward ; all the treasures of heaven must be open for him ; why should we put off God with a little praise ?

PART X.

THE DOCTRINE IMPROVED FOR INFORMATION.

The excellence of religion—Declares the glory of God—The true way of attaining peace with God—The ministry of the gospel an inestimable blessing—Faith—Its foundation—Nature and necessity of it—Its true object—How pleasing it is to God—The sufficiency of Christ—Assurance of all blessings—The guilt of man's conduct towards God—The way of religious worship—Jesus the only medium of reconciliation—Love of God incomprehensible—Illustrious in the satisfaction of Jesus—Greater love than shewn to angels—Argued from the condition of man—The freeness of it—The design of the love of God—The perpetuity of it.

I NOW come to the general use of the doctrine. I. For information.

First. This declares the *excellency* of the christian religion, *above any other* that ever was in the world. All the philosophy and learning in the world can never acquaint us with these mysteries. In the gospel we see the face of God unveiled, whereas with *natural light we can but feel or grope after him*, Acts 17. 27. He is not far from us by the light of nature, but in a cloud, not barefaced; but the light of the

glory of God shines forth in the face of Christ. How does this way of the gospel shame all other religions, all other notices of God ! It resolves the question, which nonplusses the natural learning of the world, and gives light to the impossibilities of reason. No other knowledge presents us with a reconciled God, and a reconciling Jesus ; this only salves the honour of God, repairs the ruins of nature, ensures the happiness of the creature, and discovers an eternal inheritance upon a firm foundation ; this varnishes all the attributes of God, calms the conscience, cures natural jealousies of God, and restores the creature to answer the end of his creation ; this declares things worthy of God ; honourable to him, as well as beneficial to the world ; it shows him in the heights of his wisdom, and the depths of his holiness ; the length of his love, and the breadth of his justice.

1. It *declares the glory of God*. We know something of God by natural reason ; but the full story of his glorious perfections is not printed in the book of the creation, as in that of redemption. Hence when he speaks of his redeeming design, he often adds, *that I may be glorified*, Isa. 49. 3 ; & 60. 21, as though he had no glory lying in in the womb of creation, but all was to spring out from that of redemption. The creation of the world was but a preparation to this, the creation was too dim a glass to show the image of God's glory ; he seems to intimate, that *his creating the heavens and stretching them out, the spreading forth the earth, and that which comes out of it, and giving breath to people upon it*, Isa. 42. 5, 6, was as a stage on which he would call Christ to act the highest part as a covenant for the people. He laid the foundation of the old world, to build those new things upon. The glory of the creation was too low for a great God to rest in. Upon sin, the creation was laid waste, and the glory of God had sunk with the ruins of it, had not this succeeded.

This restored to him the glory of his creation, with

interest and increase. His stretching out the heaven, and spreading the earth, had glorified his power ; the damning man upon his fall had honoured his justice ; where then should the standing angels have had a prospect of his tenderest love, immense wisdom, and severest justice ? He had never been known in his full beauty by any creature, had not the platform of this counsel been laid and executed ; whence he calls his calling Christ in righteousness, to open the eyes of the blind, and committing the work of reconciliation to him, *his glory that he would not give to another*, i. e. entrust in any other hands, than in the hands of his Son, *Isa.* 42. 6, 7, 8, peculiarly *his glory*, which he does not ascribe to himself so eminently in stretching out the heavens. His attributes were glorified, some in one act, some in another ; here they kiss each other with mutual congratulations ; mercy rejoices that justice is satisfied, justice rejoices that mercy is manifested ; wisdom and holiness join in the hands of mercy and justice together. In other things they are scattered in various subjects, here they are banded in one knot, and shine forth with united beams. In which respect Christ may be said to be *the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person*, as well as in that of his Deity, *Heb.* 1. 3, *χρoακτῆρ* : wherein we may see the perfections of God engraven as visibly as a stamp upon the seal : his wisdom, mercy, justice, holiness, and truth. *The light of the glory of God breaks forth in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor.* 4. 6. In the actions and sufferings of Christ, God exhibits himself in the glory of his nature, and gives a fuller view of himself, who was but imperfectly known before. Here the world may see him in the beauty of his holiness, the condescending sweetness of his nature, the severity of his justice, the inexhaustibleness of his bounty, and brightness of his wisdom ; thus he shows himself at once clearly legible in all his perfections. What religion in the world gives us such an account of God ? What discovery did so fully evi-

dence him in his robes of royalty at once? Never was the earth seen so full of the glory of God, as in the mediation of Christ; then was there *glory to God in the highest* ascents, a glory reaching as high as the highest heavens, when there was peace on earth, *Luke 2. 14.*

(1.) It manifests his *wisdom*. Which shoots forth with clearer beams in his Son than in the creation. In which regard Christ is called *the wisdom of God*, i. e. the highest discovery of his wisdom; there is a counsel, as well as will, in the more minute passages of his providence; but there is a more glorious workmanship of wisdom in the work of reconciliation; a manifold wisdom in laying the reconciliation frame with advantage to the glory of his name, and the welfare of the creature; which could not be conceived by angels or men before they saw it unfolded, for it was hid in God from the beginning of the world, and was not then *made known to the angels*, *Eph. 3. 9, 10.* What is the frame of heaven and earth to this? Just as his power and wisdom is in the making a clod of earth, to that which appears in the fabric of a man. In the creation it is like a sun-beam through the cranny of a wall, this like the sun facing us in its full glory; he is the only wise God, as he is our Saviour, *Jude 25.*

And the apostle fixes the best note to it, when he calls it; *all wisdom and prudence*, wherein God *abounded* too, *Wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence*, *Eph. 1. 8*; all wisdom in contriving and determining the way, prudence in ordering and disposing the means consonant thereunto; wisdom in drawing the platform, and prudence in digging through all impediments, and making even the seeming obstacles serve as steps to the execution. How great was that wisdom that restored us by that *λόγος*, that word, whereby he had created us, and appointed his Son, who had an holiness exactly to obey him, and a power to obey him, and a power to bear the weight of whatsoever was necessary to make up the breach? And this mystery he kept secret in his own breast from the beginning of

the world, revealed to none distinctly, but by the gospel, after the incarnation of Christ; that it might evidently appear to be the work only of his wisdom, and therefore called *hidden wisdom*, 1 Cor. 2. 7, whence the apostle, speaking of this as a mystery kept secret, breaks out into the praise of God for it, as the *only wise God*, Rom. 16. 25, 26, 27. What religion in the world declares the security of God's rights with man's happiness? What doctrine besides this, answers all contradictions, and discovers justice possessing all its rights, and mercy fully answered in all its desires?

(2.) His *power*. As the Father was in Christ reconciling the world, Christ was the power of God, as well as the wisdom of God, *Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 24. The power of God in breaking the heart of the enmity by the death of the cross, and overthrowing all the designs of the evil Spirit. The power of God is manifest in sustaining all things after the foundation of the world tottered, more than if he had destroyed this world, and made a new one. That man hath a mighty power over his own passions, that when he is extremely injured without giving the least occasion, yea and against multiplied benefits, should study ways of reconciliation with that person, though he knew he should receive new slights from him upon the offers of such kindness; a mightier power would be manifest over himself, if he should part with his dearest friend, or a beloved son, to expose him to contempt and ignominy, for renewing the amity between him and his ungrateful adversary; such a man would have a mighty power and royalty. *Rex est qui sibi imperat*. Other things show the power of God over the creatures, this is, as it were, power over himself.

If the pardon of one sin, or the sins of a nation; argue the greatness of God's power, *Numb.* 14. 17, the power of God is pleaded by Moses as an argument to pardon the provoking Israelites, *Let the power of my Lord be great*; much more does the reconciling a world;

here is a power over his own wrath deeply provoked by his offending creatures, a power over his own affections and love to his Son ; a power over himself after such vast provocations, and a foresight of more, enhanced by ingratitude and slights of his creatures, and studying ways of reconciliation, while the offender was exercising fresher hostilities against God. It is an inconceivable power, and greater than that which is visible in the creation, and will be acknowledged so by those that understand the evil of sin, and the immense provocations offered to the justice of God. What religion in the world gives us any notice of so vast a power in God, as the gospel does in this case ?

(3.) The *wonders of his goodness*. How is the gospel an edition of God's heart as it wrought from eternity ? An unfolding and opening of his bowels which lay secretly yearning ? This *brings life and immortality to life*, 2 Tim. 1. 10, which lay locked up in the cabinet of God's purpose, till they were unlocked and brought down to men in the gospel. In this we may see the scheme and model of his thoughts, the method of his counsels, the treaties about man's recovery, all the motions of his goodness, in its descent to earth and ascent to heaven, carrying at last the creature with it, to the wearing an eternal crown upon its head. How did he prepare all things for man's recovery, before man's fall, which was foreseen by him, and decreed to be permitted ; providing a medicine before the disease ; casting about to reduce rebels to amity, before they had a being wherewith to rebel ? Where is that religion besides, that presents us with such draughts of divine love, that declares its secret resolves and transactions, that tells us of such an immense flood of bounty flowing down upon mankind ? The heathens regarded God as severe, though they saw testimonies of his patience : they saw not those springs of kindness rising up in his own breast ; they imagined them drawn out by their sacrifices and solicitations, and purchased by their services. Here

is the goodness and tender compassions of God making the first motion, laying on one colour after another, till it was brought to perfection. The gospel shows us God contriving redemption by his own wisdom, drawing it with his own hand, working it by his own power.

All this shows the excellency and amiableness of his nature. Honourable to God, a pattern of goodness to men, the highest incentive to a worship, adoration, and service of him, to all those duties which are most fit for a creature toward God, admirations of him, self-humiliation, dependence, ingenuous obedience; such discoveries of God leave men without excuse in all their contradictions to him. He is not represented in the gospel with his standard up, his weapons sharpened, his bow bent, and his arrows prepared, unless against inveterate and wilful unbelievers; but the gospel draws him to our view sheathing his sword, placing his arrows in his quiver, not in his bow, with his arms open, his countenance smiling; means sufficient to make us sink down in a self-abomination, and rise up in the choicest affections to God. No religion represents God so admirably, so amiably to man, so worthy of himself, and with greater motives to those duties which become a creature, and therefore this hath an excellency above all other religions in the world.

2. It has an excellency above all other religions, in *showing the true way of attaining peace with God*, and thereupon peace in ourselves. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself; not in any other methods, not in purifications and washings superstitiously practiced by the heathens; not in sacrifices of beasts, though commanded to the Jews; but only as types of the great sacrifice God intended. All other ways of appeasing God are fond and foolish, cannot find a foundation in common and ordinary reason; they disparage God rather than honour him in such mean and sordid thoughts of him, as though an

infinite justice could be bribed by the blood of a beast: all other religions widen the breach, but do not in the least close it. But here we see a God of peace and a Prince of peace embracing each other, and *the voice of the turtle is heard* in the world. The gospel is the dove bringing an olive-branch of peace, put into its mouth by God: it brings us news of the allay of his wrath, which was due to our sins, and that his sword is blunted by himself in the cross of his Son, that it might not be sheathed in our souls. It shows us a shelter for storms, a light in God's countenance even in the shadow of darkness.

Here God draws near to man, that man may have access to him. He makes his Son like to man, that man might be rendered capable of approaching to God. Two natures are joined in one person, that there may be an amiable conjunction of two different parties; he exposes his beloved Son to the strokes of his justice for a time, that he might reassume his life with honour for ever. It is a way that reason cannot disapprove of, since nothing could conduce more to the honour of God, and nothing more establish the peace of the creature. Other religions have framed mediators of their own, deified men, whereby they might have access to God. God in the gospel presents us with a Mediator of his own choosing, of his own fitting, of his own ordering; one that he will not refuse, whose intercession he is pleased with; that he might keep off the darts of divine justice from us, that we *might draw near through the veil of his flesh*, *Heb. 10. 20*; that we may look upon God in Christ, without being dazzled by his glory, or scorched by his wrath.

Now may devouring fire and combustible stubble meet together; fire without scorching, stubble without consuming. Here misery may approach to glory, because glory condescends to misery. Hereby guilt is removed, which makes us incapable of access to God, and wrath is removed, which hinders our actual access. Here may all that will believe in God through

Christ and conform to his laws, walk in the midst of the furnace of God's justice without having an hair of their heads touched, without feeling the smart of that, which will be quick in consuming unregenerate men. Since nothing else discovers any peace with God, no doctrine else can make any peace in the conscience. It is the old way gives rest to the soul, *Jer.* 6. 16, the way as old as the first promise of a Reconciler. All other ways, if rightly considered, rather promote than allay suspicions of God. Conscience has no ground to make any comfortable reflections, without some plain declaration of God's reconcileableness and reconciliation. Conscience can show us our guilt, but nothing in the world evidences the way of our peace but the gospel; no other religion discovers God in treaty about reconciliation.

Herein the christian religion transcends all others; it glorifies God, and dignifies the creature. Salvation is bestowed upon fallen man, but the honour of all redounds to God, *that no flesh may glory in his presence*. Here is an admirable temperament of justice and mercy, in the reconciliation of God and the creature. *I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and judgment, in kindness and mercy, Hos.* 2. 19. Judgment in the satisfaction by the surety, an efflux of mercy in requiring no portion at our hands.

SECOND Information. If God be the author of reconciliation and redemption, then *the knowledge of this*, the declaration of the gospel, *is an inestimable blessing* to a nation. What better news can God send to men? The very declaration of it, is a lifting a nation up to heaven; *And thou Capernaum that art exalted to heaven, Mat.* 11. 23. The bibles in our hands are inexpressible blessings, since God has made a large comment upon that first promise which he gave to Adam: God has declared to the world in full, what he gave Adam as it were in a scrip of paper: he hath unfolded in his word the mystery, brought it to perfection, and proclaimed it openly, and given us

a glass wherein we may see his glory. * The discovery of Christ in the flesh, was a greater glory belonging to the second temple than what was in the first, notwithstanding all its ornaments and riches. The people wept when they saw the beauty of the second temple inferior to that of the first; and indeed there was wanting in it, the propitiatory, the holy fire, urim and thummim, the spirit of prophecy, and the ark of the testimony; yet, God tells them *the glory of the latter house should be greater than that of the former*, Hag. 2. 9, though it wanted all those things. The matter of it was not so precious, the condition of the inhabitants was more grievous. The temple was often pillaged, by Antiochus, Pompey, Crassus. There must be some other gift proportionable to the majesty of that God who had promised, as the words following declare, *I will give peace*; not a temporal peace;—for they never had such cruel wars as after the building of that temple. But a spiritual peace, a peace between God and man, between God's justice and our sins, by the means of the Messiah. He would not adorn the temple with riches; he could if he would, for the gold was his and the silver his, ver. 8. But the declarations of peace which should be wrought in that city, and published in that temple, was the glory of the place.

What though a nation should be brought to poverty and disgrace, have the waves of all kind of afflictions go over their heads, while God keeps up the declarations of a spiritual peace, while he proclaims still the reconciliation of which he is the author? The nation is still glorious, though externally miserable. God never employed his thoughts so much about the riches and honour of a nation, the gold and ornaments of the temple, as about the reconciliation of man. While God declares that to a people which is the subject of his thoughts, the delight of his heart; the glory of a nation is preserved: but when once he

* Mornai contre les Juifs, chap. 4. p. 110, 111.

shuts his mouth, and will speak no more, when his voice shall not be heard in our streets, when he shall shake off the dust of his feet against us; then we may write *Ichabod* upon ourselves, *the glory is departed*, though wealth and outward glory should stay behind.

The proclaiming the everlasting gospel, is the fall of Babylon. When the angel comes forth with the everlasting gospel, *Rev. 14. 6*, he is presently followed by another that brings the tidings of Babylon's fall; *Babylon is fallen, is fallen*, ver. 8. The removing the everlasting gospel is the rising of Babylon, and makes way for an army of judgments: desolation follows upon a nation, when *God's soul departs from them*, *Jer. 6. 8*, and his soul departs from them, when he breaks off any further treaties with men upon the articles of peace in the gospel. The gospel is nothing else but a proclamation of the articles of peace. His thoughts of peace were the cause of his sending Christ, the accomplishment of the reconciliation is the ground of proclaiming it. He sent Christ to effect it, and his Spirit in the gospel to ratify it. It is called by the title of *the word of reconciliation*, *2 Cor. 5. 19*, as though nothing else was intended in it, but to make God and man at peace together actually. It is a declaration of his ardent desire to return into amity with us, that he is satisfied by the death of his Son, and can admit us without any contradiction to his justice, and with a stronger security than at the first creation.

What a mercy is it, that God should make known his gospel to us, and not to all in the world! If he did not intend to be reconciled to some in a nation, he would never transmit it from one nation to another. He has made known his *godhead and power* to all, *Rom. 1. 20*, but not his placability and mercy to all. Men may know by natural light, that God is merciful, and yet not know that he hath erected a propitiation for the world in Christ; and without this distinct knowledge no man can be saved under the new testament; and by all the knowledge of

God's mercy in the world, they were never able to arrive to this without a special revelation, no more than by the knowledge of the nature of a candle, they can arrive to the knowledge of the nature of the sun in the heavens. Is not this a glory, a happiness? what praise doth God deserve from us for it!

THIRD Information. This doctrine acquaints us with the *whole concern of faith*. It shows,

1. What a *strong foundation* of faith we have. God chose him, called him, counselled him: he is wise, and would not choose a feeble and uncertain reconciler, unable to manage the business committed to him; he is immutable, and in regard of the holiness of his nature, will not and cannot recede from his own choice and approbation; he has done all that he can possibly to show himself placable and pacified. Christ has done all which concerned him, to the high satisfaction and content of God. All the business lays on our side, whether we will join issue with God in it; whether our hearts shall endeavour to run parallel with the counsel of God in it; whether his approbation shall be the joyful measure of ours. What high ground have we to own and accept this pacification; or what pretence can we have to refuse it? If we do not refuse it, God cannot, his act hath been already past: for Christ is a reconciler of his election. It is his glory, and our security, that he is a God that changes not; *For I am the Lord, I change not, therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed, Mal. 3. 6.* Which seems to me to be spoken in relation to the Messenger of the covenant, ver. 1, and not to the words immediately foregoing, ver. 5. As if God should say, I will punish, for I am unchangeable in my justice; which would infer rather their destruction than their preservation: but I have decreed the sending the Messenger of the covenant, and I am unchangeable in this purpose, and in the accomplishing all the fruits of his coming, therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed. The assurance

is stronger, since the decree has been manifested, and the satisfaction accepted by the injured Father.

God has provided such a satisfaction to himself, in the death of his Son, as is answerable to the greatness of the creature's guilt, a remedy for the creature's fears. The God who was offended, is pacified; the law which cursed the sinner, is satisfied; the honour of God, which stood in the way of happiness, is repaired. He sent him when we did not desire him, he sent him when we did not expect him; when there was scarce any faith in the promise of the Messiah left in all the land of Judea; and sent him not to procure a temporal good, but the favour of God, which is the source of inconceivable happiness; and was so far from dealing with us as enemies when we were in his hands, that he did the utmost he could to lay a foundation of amity, and put the management of it into the hands of the person dearest to him, whom he could only trust.

Had God spared any cost to reconcile us, our doubts might be excusable; but since he has discovered a combination of gracious acts about Christ, that his thoughts only run upon this, and had no other intention but the glory of his name in the happiness of the offending creature; there is no room for distrust, if we embrace his conditions. The very end of raising him and giving him glory, and therefore of all the actions preceding, was *that your faith and hope might be in God*, 1 Pet. 1. 21, that you might believe him to be a God reconciled, and thereupon hope for all blessings from him which he hath promised. As crucified, Christ is the object of faith; as exalted, he is the ground of faith. This sufficiency of Christ as a ground of faith, God has witnessed in the highest manner possible; *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and those three are one*, 1 John 5. 7, i. e. That gives an heavenly and divine authority to this truth.

The word *heaven*, is not to be taken for the place or local heaven, for many there bear witness to it, innumerable companies of angels, and martyrs, and glorified Spirits : but we must understand it of an extraordinary testimony. As when it is said, *The heavens shall reveal his iniquity, Job 20. 27, i. e.* God by an extraordinary judgment shall manifest to man, that he was a wicked creature. *And these three are one*, not only in their essence, but in their testimony, which gives a greater strength to this witness ; as the testimony of a man is stronger, when it is in conjunction with the testimony of others, who are worthy to be credited ; and this record is, that faith has a strong foundation, and will have a blessed success ; it was the whole purpose of the blessed Trinity to join together in this extraordinary witness in all their acts, that Christ is a full ground of faith in God. So that now a faithful person may highly plead this, “ Lord I present thee with a Mediator of thy own choice. Thou didst choose him for me, before I did choose him for myself ; thou didst counsel him to undertake this office, before thou didst command me to accept him ; thou didst call him to be a reconciler, before thou didst call me to be reconciled ; thou didst bruise him for me ; this is thy only act, and this I plead, and upon this foundation will I rest the weight of my soul.” It is a ground for a brave plea ; for God would not busy himself about any thing that should have no effect.

God would not deceive his people, and feed them with vain hopes in a business of so great a concern ; he will not go back from his own appointment, he cannot go back from his own word, his own deed, his own counsel, which he is pleased with, especially since it was not by permission, as Adam’s sin was, but by his grace, which makes, in the apostle’s judgment, the efficacy of Christ’s death stronger for reconciliation, than Adam’s offence was for the breach of amity ; *If through the offence of one many be*

dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many, Rom. 5. 15, i. e. acting all along in it, and with it in a way of grace from the first original of his gift, and therefore it abounds, i. e. is more efficacious to the salvation of men, than Adam's was to their condemnation.

2. It shows us the *nature* and *necessity* of faith. God has appointed Christ a Mediator between himself and man. God has testified himself reconciled in this Mediator; all his acts about him signify those things. Faith on our parts, is nothing else but an act of our souls, answering to those acts on the part of God. As God chose him, commissioned him, accepted him, glorified him, so faith is a full approbation of all the acts of God in this concern. A choice of Christ, an acceptance and glorifying him, putting our concerns into his hands, receiving him as our Mediator and king, upholding him, as far as creatures ability reaches, in his office; resting in him, in his precepts by obedience, in his promises by dependence; and by such terms faith is set out in scripture. As God looks to him as his rest, *Isa. 66. 2*, so we are to look to him and be saved, *Isa. 45. 22*. As God looks unto him with all the affections of a God, we should look unto him with all the affections of a creature. A mediator must be accepted by both parties that are at variance, and they must stand to what that mediator doth: as when two princes are at difference, and a third interposes to make an agreement between them, they must both consent to accept of that prince for mediator, and both put their concerns into his hand: he can be no mediator for him, that does not accept of him in that relation. God hath appointed this Mediator and settled him in this office, because God and man did not stand upon equal terms; God being the Sovereign and only offended, man being the offending criminal. God has declared himself fully contented, and hath com-

plied with all the conditions of the first agreement ; it only rests now, that man will accept of him for those purposes for which God did constitute him ; and comply with those conditions which God hath settled. This is necessary, God saves no man against his will ; and he that does not join issue with God in consenting to this, declares he has no purpose to be saved by him.

There must be some mediator to make God and man meet in agreement, to answer all the ends of God, and restore the fallen creature ; God has appointed no other than his Son ; if men could find out any other, and propose him, God is not bound to accept of him. But what mediator can man appoint to treat with God ? Without consent to this person, man is utterly undone ; for all the wit of men and angels cannot find out a person fit for so great a business. If it were possible, it is an increase of the crime, and an high presumption for a criminal, to stand upon terms, and refuse the person the prince chooses to mediate for him, when there can be no exceptions against him : which shows the necessity of faith in Christ, in whom God hath been reconciling the world, and only in him ; and the duty of the creature, to acquiesce in God's contrivance, and constitution. God has taken a full measure of Christ and all his sufferings, and found him complete ; therefore our faith should be complete in him. As God hath singled him out from angels and men, to be an expiatory sacrifice, and a great king, so faith suits itself to this act of God in singling Christ out from all other competitors, to be a Reconciler and Lord ; and the righteousness of God, from all other righteousness. This faith must not be a naked *assent*, as God's act about Christ was not a naked assent, but a full hearty *consent* ; a joy in him, an acceptance of him, with all his affections : so must ours be.

3. It shows us *the true object* of faith. Not God in the simplicity of his own being, not Christ alone in

his incarnation and death, but *God in Christ*. As God was in Christ reconciling the world, so God in Christ is the object of faith. God is the ultimate object of faith, Christ the immediate object; *He that believes on me, believes not on me, but on him that sent me, John 12. 44*; not on me ultimately, his faith is directed to God; as he that believes an ambassador, not only gives credit to him, but to the prince that sent him: and to God, not as Creator, but as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; to God as ordering, to Christ as acting; to God as commissioning, to Christ as commissioned; *You believe in God, believe also in me, John 14. 1*. In God as the author of all good, in me as the Mediator and purchaser of all grace: in God as the first author, in Christ as the faithful executor: God is the sun, Christ is the beam; our eye ascends to the sun by the beam, but terminates not in the beam, but in the sun: faith ascends ultimately to God, as being the head of Christ, *1 Cor. 11. 3*. And the salutation is first *peace from God the Father, 1 Cor. 1. 3*, the fountain and spring of all that Christ did. In Christ we see the smiles of God, in Christ we hear the joyful sound of his love and mercy, in Christ we feel the beatings of his heart: the Father is the reconciled, the Son the reconciler, faith is therefore called faith towards God, *Heb. 6. 1*, and we are said to *believe in God through Christ, 1 Pet. 1. 21*, and *through his name, Acts 10. 43*.

God is the primary and principal object, Christ the immediate; both must be taken in. He that believes not in the Son, believes not in the Father; he that believes not in the Son as reconciler, believes not in the Father as reconciled: he that believes not in the satisfaction and mediation of Christ, believes not in the Father satisfied; for *he that honours not the Son, honours not the Father which hath sent him, John 5. 23*, for they are one in the work of redemption, and in all the grace which flows down to us, as well as in nature. As Christ is the Son equal with the

Father, we believe in him as God; as he is Mediator, we believe in him as God's servant, furnished by him with authority and ability. He is the proper object of faith, as being one with the Father. If he were not God, he could not be the object of trust; *Cursed is the man that trusts in man; blessed is the man that trusts in the Lord, Jer. 17. 5, 7.* And a blessedness is pronounced to those that trust in the king God hath set upon Sion; and in the *chief corner stone* he has laid in Sion. He is the medium of our faith, as he is God's servant.

We believe in God as the *author*, we believe in Christ as the *means*. Faith fastens upon Christ as a gift, upon God as the donor. It receives Christ as God's token and gift of transcendent kindness; and from ravishments with this gift, the soul ascends to confidence in the giver. It reads God's heart in Christ, sees the glory of God in the face of Christ, and mounts up to clasp about one who hath declared himself in amity. We eye Christ as the expiation, God as the judge; we see Christ upon the cross, and in heaven; but we consider by whose authority he is there, for what ends he is there; and both the authority and the ends lead us naturally to God, to place our confidence in him as the rector, the acceptor, and in Christ as Mediator. For faith is a grace that comforts the soul; joy and peace come in by *believing*, *John 15. 13.* What joy can there be in Christ's actions and passion, unless we regard God the Father as concerned in them? God is a God of all comfort, as being a God of all peace. All Christ's sufferings signify nothing, but as they refer to God, and have his approbation and concurrence; so our faith is not right, and signifies nothing, which does not make the whole honour redound to God.

4. It shows the *acceptableness* of faith to God, and the high pleasure he takes in it. Faith is an approbation of God's actions herein, and of the whole scheme; It is a sealing the counterpart, as God's act was a

sealing the original deed; it is a testimony to the glory of all those attributes he honoured in the mediation of Christ. As Abraham by his faith gave glory to God, to his *truth*, and to his *power*, which were concerned, one in the intention of making good his promise, the other in his ability to perform it; so in believing in God as reconciled through Christ, and that he has taken off the curses of the law, and will bestow an everlasting righteousness, and relying upon him in a way of obedience (as Abraham did in that case) we acknowledge God's veracity, wisdom, holiness, justice, love; and we acknowledge Christ's love, tenderness, and sufficiency. It is an applauding the wisdom of God in his choice. Certainly that God that gives us so many exhortations to be followers of him, to be like him, is delighted to see men have the same sentiments with himself; to be like him in their judgments of things in regard of knowledge, and like him in the practice of things in regard of holiness; he delights to see that his Son's blood was not shed in vain; to perceive himself and his Son glorified by men in laying down their weapons. Every act of faith is a new glory to God; it is to the *praise of the glory of his grace*. God justifies us by this way of reconciliation, and our acceptance of it justifies God from all charge and imputations from the creature, as the approving of John's baptism, *Luke 7. 29*, was a justification of God. Next to the joy God has in Christ, he has the joy in the beginnings of faith, there is *joy in the presence of the angels*, *Luke 15. 10*. Christ has a joy in the faith and obedience of his people, *John 15. 11*. And when their faith is perfect, they shall at last be *presented before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy*, *Jude. 24*. *The presence of his glory*; God will appear more glorious, when he comes to see all the purchased and redeemed ones of Christ, that have approved of his gracious and wise contrivance, and given him the honour of his attributes by believing obedience to his will. *With ex-*

ceeding joy, since the subject of this joy is not determined in the text, it may be understood of the joy of God, of the Mediator, of the saints. Presented; God shall receive the presents *ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει*, with an exulting joy.

FOURTH Information. We see here the strength and sufficiency of Christ for all the concerns of his mediation. God would not have called him out for this work, had he not been able to accomplish it; he would never have laid the government of things, in order to a restoration, upon unable shoulders. God would no more have chosen him, or been pleased with any proposition of it, than he was pleased with sacrifice and burnt-offerings. God would not fail of his end; his end was reconciliation; Christ therefore was able to pacify the sharpest wrath. It was not agreeable to God's wisdom to choose an unable or an unskilful agent. God was certain of the event, he would never have exposed the human nature, united to the second person, to a task wherein it should have utterly sunk under the justice of God. God had more love to his creature, than to venture the eternal concerns of those he was resolved to save on a weak foundation, that could not have resisted the sturdiest rocks, and most blustering storms. God foresaw the vast number of those sins, though numberless to man, that stood in need of pardon, when he singled out Christ to this charge. It was for *many offences* he intended the merit of Christ, *Rom. 5. 16*, even for as many offences as those for whom he died would be guilty of; and he would not lay them upon the shoulders of one who was not able to bear them.

He was every way able, as he had the same nature and glory with the Father; he was every way fit in the affinity he had with both parties, whereby he could reach out his hand to both; the hand of his Deity to the Father, that of his humanity to man. As God he could satisfy for all mankind; as man, he could suffer. Had he not been every way fit and able, the

Majesty of heaven, who was desirous of reconciliation, would not have fixed upon him. No creature could satisfy by suffering, because no creature had an infinite dignity in his person to render temporary sufferings of infinite value: nor could any creature present a service as valuable as the offence was provoking. No man can be *profitable* to God, *Job* 22. 2. Good services among men take not off the sentence of the law in a court of judicature, without a pardoning act of the Supreme Power. Where was there any creature who had strength enough to bear our sins, and dignity enough to satisfy for them? Our offences were too great a load for a creature's strength, or a creature's suffering, or expiation. Here was the humanity in conjunction with the divinity, to be the sacrifice; and the divinity in conjunction with the humanity, to be the altar, for the sanctification of it. The whole method of God's proceedings assures us of the sufficiency of Christ for the work of mediation: had he not been fit, God would never have laid all his honour at stake in the choice of him to it. And the sequel shows that God is fully satisfied with it, since on the consideration of it, justice forgets the injuries done to the Deity, and treats believers as heirs of heaven instead of rebels.

FIFTH Information. It gives an *assurance* of all spiritual and eternal blessings. Since God was in Christ reconciling the world, and was the author of all the methods of it, and the acceptor of the performance. Christ must cease to be a reconciler, before God can cease to be reconciled. God was in Christ from eternity in the resolve of it; he has been in Christ in time, in the acting of it; he will be in Christ for rendering the fruits of it fully ripe. Christ is the knot and band of the reconciliation, and is gone to heaven in our nature to secure it. God is in Christ approving it; the second person is in the humanity ensuring it: his conducting Christ through the world in human infirmities to eternal glory, is an assurance

that he will dignify all those that by faith lay hold on him, and lay down their weapons against him. If he be in Christ reconciling the world, he is in Christ treasuring up all other blessings for us; since it is an everlasting gospel, full of everlasting blessings.

1. *God's end is not yet perfected.* God has not attained his full end: reconciliation was but in order to further blessings. There may be a reconciliation wrought between parties, whereby a party is freed from punishment, without being partaker of a special amity. God did send Christ to make peace, not simply to be at peace with his creature, but to second it with other mercies which the enmity before was a bar unto. It is a reconciliation that teems with many more inexpressible blessings. The riches of his grace, and the glory of his grace, would not be fully displayed by a single peace. The mystery which he purposed in himself was, that he might gather together all in one, even in Christ, to the full possession of the purchased inheritance, *to the praise of his glory, Eph. 1. 10, 14*: his glory would not attain its full praise, without further blessings at the heels of this. He will rejoice in believers for ever. How can he rejoice in them, if they never come to rejoice in themselves? if there be always a defect and indigency in them? The remnants of enmity will drop off, the appearances of anger in his face as a Father will one day for ever vanish, and every frown be smoothed. God is perfectly reconciled, but believers are not yet fully fit for all the fruits of it. But since he has been in Christ laying the foundation in grace, he will be in him rearing the superstructure to glory. God would be at peace with us, that he might bestow the highest kindness upon us. Justice stood in the way, and God would have his justice satisfied, that mercy might flow down without any obstacle. Since therefore he hath been in Christ contenting his justice, he will be in Christ fully pleasing his mercy. As infinite justice

was not contented without the death of Christ, so mercy will not be contented without an efflux of benefits upon the believer. We should not understand God fully appeased, if things remained always in one state.

2. *The glory of God is concerned in it.* If he be the author of it, he will no less be the guardian of it; the same motives of honour and love which excited him to contrive it, and brought it to this issue, will have the same influence on him to ripen all the fruits of it. As he hath the title of *the God of our Lord Jesus Christ*, in regard of the whole interest he has in this affair of redemption, so the apostle gives him another title in relation to the same work. *The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, Eph. 1. 17.* He is the Father of glory, as he is the fountain of all the glory which accrues from this work, as well as he is the Father of glory subjectively, in the glory of the divine essence infinitely glorious, and objectively, as all glory is due to him from his creatures. He is the Father of glory, as all the actions of Christ did centre in the honour of the Father; or the Father of glory, as being the author of all those gracious and glorious communications designed to be bestowed by him, as the God of the Lord Jesus Christ, upon his creatures. It is by him, as the Father of glory in Jesus Christ, that a *Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ*, is given; a full and complete knowledge of him, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. If God designs to show himself a Father of glory as the God of the Lord Jesus Christ, and if he shows himself a Father of glory in increasing the knowledge of Christ, by a Spirit of wisdom in the hearts of his people, and acquainting them with the riches intended for them; the crown of his glory would be dim, if there were only a knowledge of it, and no possession at last, and full enjoyment of all that which Christ hath pur-

chased. How little glory would God get by acquainting them with it, if the knowledge of it should not at last mount up into fruition?

3. All that remains to be done in this kind is more feasible, and has *less obstacles* than what has already been done. The grand obstacle to the fulness of his mercy, in regard of the demands of justice, is quite removed; the merit of Christ has surmounted the demerit of men: and what is behind is a lighter thing to the power, wisdom, and mercy of God, than the laying the first stone of our redemption was. Since the delivery of his Son to death, which might have found resistance from the affections of the Father, hath been performed, what is there that can be capable of any demur? How is it possible a believer should perish, since Christ hath suffered to reconcile infinite justice by the will of God? How is it possible he should miss of eternal happiness, since for God to give his Son to die for reconciliation, is infinitely more than the justification of him by his blood, and saving him through his life from wrath? Peace is the root of all joy and blessedness; and in the angels' song, *Good will towards men*, follows *peace on earth*: when peace is made, there is no bar on the highest manifestations of good will.

4. No enemies can possibly *obstruct it*. If God were in Christ reconciling the world, who can prevent the execution of his resolution to the full? Since it has been thus far carried on, all the venom of Satan against a christian, can no more deprive him of what God will do, than it could hinder what God has done. He was baffled in attempting the hinderance of it, though he engaged all the powers of hell in the contest; and was foiled, since the way he took to prevent it did eventually promote it; and in his resolving to be an hinderer, he was, by a reach of infinite wisdom beyond his own wit, made a furtherer of it; and if he could not prevent the foundation, he shall be less able to deface the superstructure: and

if the greater sins of unregeneracy did not hinder the influence, and application of it, the infirmities after regeneration shall not obstruct the full perfection of it.

SIXTH Information. It shows us the *unworthiness* of man's dealing with God. God cannot do any thing higher to sweeten our spirits towards him; he has not another or a dearer Son to give: nothing more can be acted upon the world for the security of the creature: there are no wider channels for the love of God to run in, no higher way to secure his honour from contempt, and his creature from vengeance. He was angry with us, and with good cause; we were children of wrath, and deserved it; God is appeased by the blood of Christ; he delights in the laying aside his anger, he hath done his utmost to assure men of it. Then certainly,

1. Our rejecting Christ, and the way of his appointment, is a high *contempt of God*. It is a slight of God, in the glory of his grace; an envying him the honour of the restoration. Adam envied his sovereignty and independency, and every unbeliever envies his wisdom and mercy. Since his heart was set upon this work, that all the counsels of eternity centre in it; a deafness to his proposals is a contradiction to all his counsels, and the great desire of his heart. As faith in Christ redounds to the honour of God, as being an approbation of all God's acts in this affair; so unbelief of Christ redounds to the contempt of God, as slighting all those gracious manifestations of his grace and wisdom. As the murder of a man, and every degree of murder in the contempt of him who is the image of God, is a dishonour to God in regard of the relation man bears to God in that respect, *Gen. 9. 6*, so every unworthy use of Christ, every act of unbelief, redounds to the dishonour of the Father, whose ambassador Christ is, and the exact image of his person. If men do not heartily think reconciliation by Christ worth their highest thoughts and entertainments, they reproach God; as if he were busy from eternity

about just nothing, or some trifling matter, and run through so many stages in his acts about Christ to no purpose. It is a making light of a rich feast of God's providing, *Matt. 22. 5*; it is a self-destroying fury, worse than that of devils. It is a making all other sins against God more sinful; *If I had not come and spoken to them, they had not had sin, John 15. 22*; their sin had not appeared with so much malice.

2. Our *jealousies* of God. Men are fond of suspicions of God when they are struck down with a sense of their sin, though this despair is not so ordinary as presumption. This is measuring God by man, and bringing him down to the creature's model; a contracting God's goodness, according to the creature's scantiness. Can there be any just reflections upon God, after the manifestation of his earnestness, for the reconciliation of man? If the owning God in those acts, be a justifying God, the disowning him is a condemnation of God. As Abraham glorified God when he staggered not at the promise, but embraced it by faith; so we dishonour God inexpressibly, when we stagger not only at one promise, but at his whole scene of amazing acts, in the founding and carrying on this work in Christ. It is unworthy in any truly humbled soul, to imagine God an enemy still, after all his mysterious contrivances for the relief of the creature, and his delight in his Son for answering his purpose.

3. Our *enmity* and *disobedience* to God. Though God be in Christ reconciling the world: as therefore we disparage him by our jealousies of him, we also deal unworthily with him by sinful presumption. There are terms expected to be performed by us; it is not a lazy belief, an assent to this, accompanied with a love of any one sin, that gives men a title to it; as God's love in this, and his acceptance, was not a lazy love, &c. neither must our faith. The application of it, is not but to such a faith that purifies the heart. For us not to leave the love of sin, when

God hath quenched his wrath in the blood of Christ, is an unworthy usage of God, and cuts a man off from any interest in this reconciliation. Abraham's faith, whereby he glorified God, appeared eminent in this act of obedience, in a willingness to sacrifice his Son. Not to endeavour to please God in a course of obedience, is to keep up our enmity under God's offers of amity. To presume upon his goodness, to act the highest unbelief under pretences of the contrary, to think God will be your friend, while you persist in your enmity, is a contradiction to the whole tenor of the gospel. Faith in his promises is never accounted of, without faith in his precepts. As he hath been a God in Christ reconciling the world, so he hath been commanding in Christ the world to a submission; and it is outrage, and high ingratitude, not to endeavour to please God, since he has been so careful to please us.

4. *Omissions* of prayer. Has God done so much to render us capable of coming to him, and himself capable to receive us with honour to himself, and is it not very disingenuous and slighting, to neglect this privilege, founded upon the counsels of wisdom, and the cost of the blood of Christ? Before, we could with no more comfort approach to God, than a guilty malefactor could to the judge; but since God has laid by his fury in Christ, and discovers an alluring glory in the face of Christ, what can we plead for our neglects of his allurements, our seldom approaches to him, or our slight and lazy addresses? He uses his friend unkindly, that will not make use of his friendship, and upon urgent occasions desire his assistance. All neglects imply either an inability or unwillingness of God, and both cast contempt upon his reconciling work, since there can be no greater evidences of his power and willingness than he hath discovered in the whole working of it. We virtually deny the Father to be the fountain of all grace, when we go not to him. We deny Christ to be the purchaser of all

peace, when we go not in his name. God sent Christ to consecrate *a new and living way for us to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, Heb. 10. 19.* By neglects we disparage God's mission, and Christ's consecration, and the liberty he has procured. What should we have done, if we had been to approach to God as a judge upon a tribunal of justice, when we will not draw near to him as a judge upon a mercy-seat, through the reconciliation wrought in Christ?

Well then, let us consider the danger of slighting this reconciliation. Well may that man deserve doubly the curses of the law, that will not believe and obey after God's demonstrations of the riches of grace, well may he deserve to be crushed in pieces under the insupportable burden of his own guilt, that will still be fond of his treason against a reconciling God. Shall the great king descend from the throne of his majesty to become a reconciler, and after that a solicitor, and feel nothing but *heels lifted up, John 13. 18,* instead of hearts? Such an one is doubly a child of wrath, first by nature, and after by a particular refusal to become a friend. The interest of our souls lies at stake; without changing our unworthy courses, wrath will be executed upon us; God has provided no other reconciler; and is resolved not to let his weapons fall by any other motive than the blood of the Redeemer.

SEVENTH Information. It shows us the *way* of all religious worship. If God be in Christ reconciling the world, all our recourse to, and dealing with, a reconciling God, must be in and through Christ: as God's motion to us is in Christ, our motions to God must be through the same medium. He is *the way, the truth, and the life, John 14. 6.* No man comes to the Father but by me; as no man has the Father coming to him, but by Christ; the way whereby God communicates truth and life to us, the way whereby we must offer up our true and lively services to him. As God is the ultimate object of faith, Christ the

medium ; so God is the object of worship, Christ the medium. As Christ is equal with God, he is the object of faith ; the object of worship : as Christ is God's servant, he is the way whereby we believe, the way whereby we have access to God. The soul must be carried altogether by the consideration of Christ, in presenting petitions in his name, in expecting answers upon the ground of his merit ; we must regard him as the meritorious cause of our access to the throne of grace, and our welcome at it. How can we go to God as reconciled, but in the name of the reconciler ? We cannot come with any boldness upon any other account.

It is by the *knowledge* of the Son, we ascend to the knowledge of the Father ; by the merit of the Son, we have access to the throne of the Father ; by the intercession of the Son, we have access to communion with the Father ; in the name of the Son we are to ask what we want, and by the merit of the Son we must only expect what we beg. It is as the *Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, that he communicates himself to us, *Eph. 1. 3* ; it is as the *Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, we must *bow our knees to him*, *Eph. 3. 14*, remembering still, that Christ is the band that unites God and us together. What confidence can we have in God, if we respect him not as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ : for in him only he is the Father of believers : otherwise he is the Father of the whole world, a provoked Father ; in Christ a reconciled Father. As the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our praises must be offered to him, *1 Pet. 1. 3*. All acts of worship, are only acceptable to the Father through Christ ; *By him let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God, Heb. 13. 15* ; all must have the stamp of this reconciler upon them. It is by his satisfaction we have the privilege to come to the holiest, before the seat of God, with our prayers and services. It is in his blood, the sword, set to prevent our entrance into paradise, has lost both its

edge and flame. It is by the blood of Christ only we have *this boldness*, *Heb.* 10. 19, 20, his blood is our best plea: his flesh our only screen from the wrath of God in all our services. We must therefore in all our services rest in his office, propose him as the Mediator of our services.

EIGHTH Information. There is then *no Mediator, no reconciler but Christ*. God is in Christ reconciling the world: in him, and none but him: in him exclusively of all others. He is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world, *John* 4. 42. By way of excellency, in regard of the danger he saves us from. By way of exclusion, in regard of the sole designation of his person, exclusive of all others. We must believe that Christ is he, the only person designed in the prophecies, promises, and types, *If you believe not that I am he, John* 8. 24. There was none anciently but he; he was set up from eternity; he was the only lamb slain from the foundation of the world. This seed of the woman was only in the promise, only designed by the types; by this band only, were the ancient believers united to God; in this Immanuel he was God with them, as well as with us: None were counted God's friends before, but by his mediation; none can be since, because God has accepted no other. No ark but that of God's appointing, could secure Noah, and resist the force of the waters. None hereafter, he is the *same for ever*; he is to day, as he was before, *Heb.* 13. 8, the heart of God is fixed upon him, and his resolution concerning the duration of his office unalterable: he has summed up all the dispensations of former ages in him; *He hath gathered together in one all things in Christ, even in him*, in no other, *Eph.* 1. 10. All other things were preparations to him, shadows of him. But the perfection of all was in Christ; and God who had various ways of communicating himself to men, has summed up his whole will in his Son, and manifested that all his transactions with men did terminate in his

Son Christ, *Heb. 2. 1, 2.* These are the *last days*, God will speak by no other.

1. None else was ever *appointed* by God. No other sacrifice was ever substituted in the room of sinners; none else was the centre of the prophecies, the subject of the promises, the truth of the types, no name erected for a shelter for the nations to trust in but this name, *The isles shall wait for his law, Isa. 42. 4.* *In his name shall the Gentiles trust, Matt. 12. 21*: none else has the title of peace-maker conferred upon him, *Eph. 2. 14*, which title he hath by his death on the cross, *Col. 1. 20.* Those therefore that reject this way of mediation, must infallibly perish. He that will have any good by a prince, must go to that minister of state he hath settled for that end. God has ordained no other Mediator. God has thought none else fit to trust with his concerns, to do his work, restore his honour, receive glory from him. We must acquiesce in God's judgment, and not set up the pride of our reason and will, in contradiction to infinite wisdom. None else was ever honoured by the voice of the Father, testifying him to be his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased: none besides him had this testimony, none in conjunction with him, none in subordination to him, in the work of mediation; *that he might be the first-born among many brethren*, enjoying all the rights of primogeniture; as God employed no other in the creation, so he employs no other in the restoration of the world.

2. None else was ever *fit* for this. Satisfaction there must be for the honour of God, that the law might be vindicated, justice glorified, holiness illustrated: none but Christ an infinite person was able to do all this. Security there must be to the Creator, that the honour of God might not be again at a loss; this could not be ensured in the hands of a mutable creature; so that by any other Mediator we cannot honour God by a suitable satisfaction, nor promise

ourselves an unshaken preservation. Without infinite satisfaction, guilt must remain ; without infinite power to preserve it entire, guilt would return. This Mediator only had an alliance to both parties ; to God, whereby he could call him Father ; to us, whereby he could call us brethren. That God and man might be joined in one covenant of grace, the Mediator of that covenant is God and man in one person. Had he been only God, he had had no alliance to our nature ; had he only been man, he had had no alliance to the divine nature, and had been an insufficient Mediator, incapable of performing what was requisite for our redemption. In this posture of fitness, there is none else in heaven and earth. Had the Mediator been only man, he had been incapable of satisfying ; had he been only God, he had been incapable of suffering ; but being God and man, he was capable of both. No motive was powerful enough to appease the anger of the Father, but the blood of the cross ; and no power strong enough to bear, no person worthy to present such sufferings, but only this Mediator. It was upon no other person that the Spirit descended like a dove, to furnish his human nature with all ability for the discharge of his trust. He is infinite, and what can be added to infinite ? If infinite be not sufficient to reconcile, finite beings must for ever come short of effecting it for us.

3. None else was ever *accepted, or designed to be accepted*, but this Mediator : no other surety was ever accepted by God for the payment of our debts. All sacrifices could not *make the comers thereunto perfect*, *Heb. 10. 1*, could not set them right in the esteem of God, and make a reconciliation with him ; they were an image, not the life ; and God accepted them as shadows, not as the substance ; the repetition of them was a certain evidence of their inability to effect the reconciliation of man, *Heb. 10. 2*, as the iteration of a medicine daily, shows its inefficacy to cure. The

law was not able after our Fall, by reason of our disagreement with the terms of it, to bring us near to God. God's justice, and our sins, stood in the way of amity ; therefore God commanded bounds to be set to the people, when the law was given, *Exod.* 19. 12, that they should not come near the mount. But the covenant of grace, veiled in the ceremonial law, was laid in the blood of Christ, typified by that blood sprinkled by Moses upon the people, *Exod.* 24. 8, to which the apostle alludes, *The blood of sprinkling speaks better things than the blood of Abel, Heb.* 12. 24, than the blood of the *firstlings*, which Abel sprinkled, *Gen.* 4. 4, which was the first eminent type of the death of Christ upon record, which the Spirit of God mentions here, as the first sacrifice, though no question, Adam did not spend all that time between his fall, and the growth of Abel to man's stature, without a sacrifice.

Those sacrifices were poor and feeble ; unworthy in themselves of the acceptance of God ; not able to expiate sin, nor ever intended for propitiation, because they had no intrinsic value in them for such an end. But the blood of Christ, being the blood of the Lamb of God without spot, is a worthy and valuable price for the sins of the world. These, nor our own righteousness, were ever intended to be of worth, or strength, to expiate the sin of the soul, and reconcile us to God ; Christ is the only peace-maker, the only peace-conveyer : no other righteousness is called the righteousness of God, the righteousness of God's appointment, or the righteousness of God's acceptance. Any thing in ourselves is too low and sordid to be joined with him. God hath accepted none else, and we must have recourse to none else. Whatsoever we would join with him, is unworthy of God's acceptance. None else was set forth to be a propitiation, and no means appointed of enjoyment, but faith in his blood. This blood was sprinkled upon the mercy-seat in

heaven, as the blood of sacrifices was in the temple, which stilled justice, refreshed mercy, and revived it towards us.

4. *None else ever did do that for us*, which was necessary to our reconciliation with God. None else ever interposed as a shelter between the irresistible wrath of God and our souls. He alone bore *our griefs, and carried our sorrows*, *Isa. 53.4*; he received into his own soul that sword which was sharpened and pointed for us; *by his stripes we are healed*, upon him alone did the burning wrath of his Father fall for our peace. He trod the wine-press alone, none of the people were with him; he endured the bruises of his Father, and the reproaches of his enemies, and would not desist till he had settled the foundation of our peace. He bore the punishment of our sins, all our iniquities were considered by God in his person, and he paid what we owed. *In one body* he reconciled us, *Eph. 1. 16*; *his own body*, saith Peter, *1 Pet. 2. 24*. None drew in the same yoke with him; none were partners with him in his sufferings; none sharers with him in his office. He scaled heaven alone, and alone made the entrance to his Father easy. None ever did, none ever could, answer the demands of the law, silence the voice of justice, by removing the burden of our guilt. He only filled up that gap and gulf which was between God and us: Why should any thing in our hearts carry away the honour of a Mediator from him, since none else removed the miseries we had deserved, and purchased the mercies we wanted? Till God therefore confers the title of peace-maker, and *prince of peace*, upon any other, own nothing else as a sharer with him in this honour; that would be to contradict God's order, deny his sufficiency, and condemn his kindness; and turn our backs upon the only tower that can hinder us from being crushed by the wrath of God. But alas! men delight in their worm-eaten, withered righteousness, which they set up in the room of

the Mediator; this, the grand cheat of the world, claims a precedency of Christ.

5. None else is appointed, or can secure to us the *fruits of reconciliation*. As God is in Christ reconciling the world, so he is in Christ giving out the fruits of that reconciliation, not imputing our trespasses to us; he is not only the Mediator of reconciliation, to make our peace; but the Mediator of intercession, to preserve it. He only took away our sins by his death, he only can preserve our reconciliation by his life. As he suffered effectually, by the strength of his Deity, to make our peace; so he intercedes in the strength of his merit, to preserve our peace. He did not only take it away, but *abolish and slay the enmity*, *Eph. 2. 15, 16*. He slew it, to make it incapable of living again, as a dead man is: and if any sin stands up to provoke justice, he sits as an *advocate* to answer the process, *1 John 2. 2*. All the gifts of grace, not only in the first purchase, but in their full conveyance, and abundant communication, *are by and through him*, *Rom. 5. 15*; by him only we can come to the throne of grace; in this beloved Son only we are accepted for adopted sons, *Eph. 1. 6*. To none else God gave children for a seed; children to regenerate and preserve, and offer up to him at the last day. He rent the veil by his death, opened the holy of holies by his passion, and keeps it open by his intercession; that we may have a communion with God, and a fellowship with angels, by this only Mediator.

Immanuel is a name only belonging to him, *Isa. 7. 14*. Not that this was the name by which only he was called, but that this was his work, to make way for God's dwelling among the sons of men, and communicating to them the richest of his gifts. Not an angel in heaven, but has his standing upon the account of Christ, as their head; and therefore not a man upon earth can be secure under any other wing, or have the conveyance of grace through any other

channel. He is the *προσαγωγὴς*, the introducer of us into the inward chambers of the Father's goodness, where our bonds are cancelled, our pardon assured, and our Father, who was angry with us, falls upon our necks and kisses us. Our constant access to the Father is by him, *Rom. 5. 2; Eph. 3. 12, access, προσαγωγή*. He sits in heaven to lead us by the hand to the Father, for whatsoever we want; as a prince's favourite brings a man into the presence of a gracious prince. The grace of Christ is put in order by Paul, before the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, in the benedictions, because it is the only band that unites us to God, and the foundation of every expression of love from the Father, and of every act of communion we have with the Holy Ghost. Whatsoever grace God works in us, is *through Jesus Christ, Heb. 13. 21*, he is therefore made to us *wisdom and sanctification*, as well as *righteousness and redemption, 1 Cor. 1. 30*. God transmits his virtues through Christ, as the heavens, which impregnate all things, transmit their virtues hither by the sun.

Well then, let us have recourse only to this Mediator; the fire of God's wrath will consume us without this screen. It is the blood of the Lamb of God's appointment, which can only secure us from the scorching heat of the wrath to come; typified by the blood of the paschal lamb, sprinkled upon the posts of the Israelites' doors; not so much to be a mark to the angel, who could have known both the houses and persons of the Israelites from the Egyptians, without that sign on the post; as to represent this mediatory blood of the Lamb of God, as our only security from destroying fury. Let men make lies their refuge, and hide themselves under falsehood, the false coverings of their own righteousness, and think to shelter themselves from the *overflowing scourge, Isa. 28, 15, 16, 17*, it will be a miserable self-deceit, the hail will sweep away such a refuge, and the waters will overflow such a hiding-place; it is the corner-stone which God lays.

in Sion, that is our only security ; because he is only *elect*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 6. Chosen by God, and *precious* in his account, ver. 6, which is inserted, as some observe, between those two verses, to show the miserable shifts of men to provide shelters for themselves, other mediations and mediators, not regarding the foundation God hath laid, all which will end in self-destruction, as they begin in self-deceit. All human satisfactions, intercessions of saints, refuge in any other righteousness, are weak hiding-places to preserve us from the overflowing waters of divine vengeance. No sure foundation, but the stone God has laid in Sion.

One would think there were not so much need to press this information ; but whosoever will look into the world, and into his own heart, will find it necessary. What the papists do one way, many protestants do another ; one sets up Mediators without him, others set up Mediators within them. The great business Christ urged in the days of his flesh was this, that he was the Messiah, the only person sent of God to redeem ; though men profess Christ is so, yet it is too common to bring in some sharer with him.

NINTH Information. We may here see *the incomprehensible love of God*, in that he did not deal with us *summo jure*, as a severe law-giver. We are not deeply sensible of it ; if we had a due sense of this love, we should have little kindness for sin. It was not a low kind of love, but *exceeding riches of grace in his kindness toward us in Jesus Christ*, *Eph.* 2. 7. Grace never appeared in all its royalty, but in Christ. A sweet combination of grace in the Father and the Son ; had the Son manifested his love in offering himself, nothing could have been done without the acceptation of the Father ; had the Father manifested his love in moving it, nothing could have been done without the Son's undertaking it ; the first motion was from the Father, as the fountain of the Trinity ; the execution was from the Son, by a free and dutiful acceptance of the offer of the Father. In this work God *set his*

heart upon man, Job 7. 17, the glorifying his name in the redemption of man, was that which ran in his mind, and had the chiefest place in his heart from eternity. How great also is the love of Christ? since he was the person that the first sin was particularly against, as well as against the Father. It being an affecting of wisdom to be like God; and Christ was the wisdom of God. Every day's mercy is a miracle; but the mercies of our lives are to this of reconciling us by his Son, as a mole-hill to a mountain; a grain of sand, to the whole frame of nature. When by our offence we were fallen under the sentence of the law, and shut up in the hands of justice, and could not satisfy for the offence, God pays a ransom out of the treasures of his own grace, opens the heart of his dearest Son, and redeems us by the most precious thing he had; here love doth come to the top of its glory, and doth perfectly triumph.

His own love and compassion *was the first rise of this reconciliation.* This way by Christ, was a new as well as a living way, *Heb. 11. 20,* not known by all the wisdom of man. New to men, new to angels; it could not enter into any of their hearts to conceive of it, before it was declared. He *purposed in himself, Eph. 1. 9.* There was none beside him from eternity, to put up a request. It was the result of his heart, before the being of any creature was the effect of his power. Though our justification, sanctification, and eternal blessedness, be the fruits of the meritorious death of the Redeemer: yet the first source of all, in his mission and commission, was absolutely from the inconceivable love of God; whatsoever is merited by Christ for us, his first mission was not merited by himself; his personal relation to God, rendered him fit for the honour and office of a Mediator: but as Mediator, he did not merit his own sending into the world, because he was settled Media-

tor by God and sent too, before he could as Mediator merit.

Christ did not die to render God compassionate to us, but to open the passage for his love to flow down upon us with the honour of his justice. God's love wrought within himself; but the sentence pronounced by justice was a bar to the flowing of them upon man: Christ was sent to remove that by his death, that the mercy, which sprang up from eternity in the heart of God, might freely flow down to the creature. And when the time came, God looked about and *saw that there was no man*, none to deprecate his wrath, and therefore *his own arm brought salvation*, and *his own righteousness sustained him*, *Isa. 59. 16*, i. e. his own truth and righteousness engaged in the promises made to the fathers. The satisfaction of Christ does not impair the kindness of God; his pity to us did precede the constitution of Christ. Had there been no compassion, there had been no contrivance, no acceptance of a Mediator: but since he had threatened eternal death to sinners, there was need of an honourable reconciliation by death, to maintain the honour of God's truth, engaged in that sentence; and content his justice, which was obliged to execute the sentence, for the honour of his truth. It was *by the grace of God* that Christ *tasted death* for us, *Heb. 2. 9*.

Here is the greatest love *that God can show*. As Abraham could not show a greater proof of faith and obedience, than by offering his Son, the Son of his affections, and his only Son; so neither can God show a richer testimony of his affections to us, than by making his own Son an oblation for us. How mighty tender was God of our salvation? How valuable was man to him, when he prized him at the rate of his only Son? As high as God did esteem Christ, so highly did he value his own glory in man's reconciliation.

1. His love was *more illustrious*, than if he had *pardoned us by his absolute prerogative without a satisfaction*. It had been a glorious mercy, but had wanted that enriching circumstance, the death of his Son ; in this way he honours his mercy, more than our sin had abused it. His mercy had not appeared in such sweetness, had not Christ drunk the bitter cup : mercy sung sweetest, when justice cried loudest against the Redeemer. Every attribute had a signal elevation in this way of reconciliation, but especially his kindness. We should have been happy, had he pardoned us without a satisfaction ; but neither his love nor his justice had been wound up to so high a strain. God did not aim only at the *praise of his grace*, but the *praise of the glory of his grace*, *Eph. 1. 6*, he would have his grace appear in the richest attire, and with all the ornaments heaven could clothe it with.

This is evident, by the *condition of the person*. He was his Son. Was it not the victorious triumph of mercy, to make his Son a sufferer, when we were the sinners ? To make his own Son a servant to his justice, when we were the debtors ? He was his *only begotten Son*, *John 3. 16*, not merely his own Son, but his only Son ; he had but one Son in the world, and that Son he made a sacrifice for the world : he had not another begotten Son in being. He was the *express image of his person, one who was equal with God, without robbery*, or detracting any thing from his glory, *Phil. 2. 6*. An only Son enjoying the same majesty, and perfections in the Deity with the Father ; a Son dearer to him than heaven and earth ; the Son he solaced himself with from all eternity, *Prov. 8. 30*, before ever any stone of the world was laid ; and if we could suppose numberless worlds created before this, yet all his joy was placed in him. Can there be a greater assurance of the immensity of his love, than in sending a Son that lay in his bosom ? A Son who never in the least offended him, nor ever could ? He always did the things which *pleased him*, and when he

was in the world, there was nothing in him, that the devil could fasten upon, as any resemblance to himself, *John* 14. 30. In this Son was God reconciling the world. The nearer and dearer the Son was to the Father, the greater is the Father's love in pitching upon him to undertake this work. His love bore proportion to the greatness of that Son whom he sent.

And consider further, the condition *in which he was sent*. He was made lower than angels, to stoop to the condition of a servant. To send an only Son out of his bosom to the cross, an innocent Son from glory to ignominy, and not upon a sudden resolve, (which might be thought a passion) but by a deliberate counsel, never repenting of it, always glorying in it, even to this day; is a discovery of the most rooted affection. The lower the condition of Christ was, the more wonderful is the kindness of God in sending him in it. If we would walk into the garden, and see Christ besmeared with clods of blood; step up to mount Calvary, and see him hanging upon the cross; look up to heaven, and see the bright sword sheathed in the heart of the Son of God; see him with his scourged back, his nailed hands, his pierced side; ask then your souls this question, whether here be not bottomless love? Whether any affection of God can be more miraculous than this, to give his Son to endure all this for our ransom, the Lord of glory to suffer this for rebellious malefactors? Whether this is not greater kindness to you, than if he had pardoned you without the sufferings of his only Son?

2. It is a love that cannot be *wound up to a higher strain*. It is the utmost bound, if I may so speak, of an infinite love; *God so loved the world, John* 3. 16. So, above the conception of any creature; So, that his affection cannot mount an higher pitch. His power could discover itself in laying the foundation of millions of worlds, and his wisdom could shine brighter in the structure of them; but if he should

create as many worlds, as there are sands and dust upon the face of this ; and make every one of them more transcendent in glory than this, than the sun is above a clod of earth or an atom of dust, yet he could not confer a greater love upon it, than he hath done upon this ; than to be, upon their revolt, a God in Christ reconciling those worlds to himself : there is not a choicer mercy than to be in amity with God, nor a more affectionate way of procuring and establishing it, than by giving his only Son to effect it : in giving whom, he contracts to give himself to be our God, and live with us for ever. If God should take the meanest beggar that lives upon common alms, and transform him into an angel, and make him the head of that heavenly host ; it would be incomparably a far less love, than the gift of his Son for him. A more condescending kindness cannot be conceived, unless the Father himself should become incarnate, and die for man : but that cannot be supposed. If the Fountain of the Trinity, the Judge of all, should take flesh, and suffer, to whom should the offering be made ? The rector and judge is to be satisfied, and it is not fit for the judge to make satisfaction to himself : but the Father hath given that person next to himself, to be our propitiation ; most fit, as having the Father, the fountain of the Trinity, to offer the sacrifice of himself unto.

3. It is a greater love than has been yet shown *to angels*. The angels in heaven never did partake of such a vast ocean of love, for the Son of God never died for them, though they came under his wing, as a head exalted to that dignity, as a reward of his death ; the angels come under him as an exalted head, but not as a crucified Saviour : they have their grace by the will of God, without the death of his Son ; we by the will of God, through the death of his Son. What confirmation they have, they have it from Christ, by virtue of his headship over them, not by virtue of any death for them, and therefore they are

in the opinion of several, understood by the *things in heaven*, which are *reconciled* to God, *Col. 1. 20*. What reconciliation is to us, confirmation is to them, yet there is not such an excess of love in their confirmation, as in our reconciliation by the blood of the cross. As the preservation of a life from death, is less than the restoring life to one that is dead; the latter argues more of kindness, as well as more of power.

4. Take a prospect of this love by a review of *the condition we were in*. Our *vileness* and *corruption*. What are we in our being, but dust, slight and empty pieces of clay? Is it not wonderful that God who hath angels to attend him, should busy his thoughts about worms? That he who hath the beauty of angels, the most glorious piece of the works of his hands to look upon, should cast his eye upon creatures so vile! That he should not rest in the praises of angels, but repair such broken instruments as men are, to bear a part in the concert! If the sun knew its own excellency, it would think it a condescension to bestow a beam upon so dark and miry a body as the earth, that can return to it no recompence; much more is it in God, to look upon such pieces of clay as we are; much more to give out his grace and love to man, who can give him no requital. We would be loath to take a toad into our bosoms, and bestow our friendship upon it: by corruption, we are worse than the most venomous toad that creeps upon the ground; yet God entertains thoughts of amity, and establishes it for us in the blood of his Son. We are unworthy of any one thought of unbounded goodness, much more unworthy of a thought of so high a strain. * Would not any man think that king distracted, that should send his Son to keep company with menials, to wear the same livery, to advance them to a better state by his own blood? Nothing but the

* Nerimberg.

end for which he does it, and the love which moved him to it, could excuse him. How much more condescending is God, than the greatest prince in the world would be in this act.

Let us contemplate the love of God, with reference to our *impotence*. When we lay wallowing in our blood, and it was the time of our weakness, that was the time of his love; when we had *no eye to pity us*, nor a heart to pity ourselves, then were we the object of his compassions, *Ezek.* 16. 4, 5, 6, &c. When there was not one solicitor for us among all the holy angels; the peace was broke with them as well as with God, and we were justly hated by those holy spirits upon the Creator's account; when not a man in the whole race of mankind had any thought of presenting a petition for recovery: when God looked about, and, to his astonishment, found none that had any thoughts of interceding and soliciting a restoration, *Isa.* 59. 16: when there was not a person in heaven or earth, besides himself, could save us, *his own arm*, without the least auxiliary force, *brought salvation*. It is the glory of his love, that he was found of us when we asked not for him, *Isa.* 65. 1. What allurements were there in our nature, unless deformities and demerits could pass for attractives? We had not virtue to merit his love, nor ever shall have power to requite it; both are utterly impossible in a creature. God saw our demerit, it was in his thoughts, otherwise a reconciler had not been appointed; one to merit that for us, which we had forfeited, and never could have recovered. Justice might find cause of punishment in the rebellion of the delinquent, but grace could find no reason but in the pity of our Creator; the amazement of a true believer, when he comes to be seriously sensible of it, does manifest the impossibility of ever thinking of it himself.

Let us also consider our *rebellion*, which is worse

than vileness and impotence. He was a God in Christ reconciling the world, when our enmity to him was as great as our misery; when we had not one spark of love for him, who had a boundless ocean of compassion for us. We had entered a league with Satan, the only enemy God had, rendered ourselves his bondslaves, and that presently after our creation by his powerful hand; and it was far worse, if Adam did know the sin and state of the fallen angels; howsoever his pride, in his aspiring thought to be like his Maker, was less excusable than that of the devils, in regard that he was an inferior creature, though the devil's was greater, in regard of his greater knowledge of the excellency of God above him. Pride in a mean person is more odious than in one upon a throne.

Then it is that he contrives with his Son, and by the blood of his Son, to redeem rebels; and though he disrelished and loathed the crime, yet he had a tenderness and pity for the malefactor: assured by an oath; *The word of the oath which was since the law, makes the Son who is consecrated for evermore, Heb. 7. 28.* As the word of the oath was after the law; the declaration of the oath, after the declaration of the law: so in the eternal counsel of God, the constitution of the reconciler supposed a law enacted, and a law violated by transgression. After this, the cry of our sins for vengeance could not alter his resolve of sacrificing his Son; and bringing that vengeance upon the sins, which they solicited against the sinner. How easy was it for God to have spurned us into hell, when we lay under his foot, without all this expence? One touch of his iron rod, would have broke us *like a potter's vessel*; yet he takes occasion to display his grace, where we give occasion to pour out his wrath. He would inflame us by his love, rather than turn us into ashes by his fury; and reconcile us to himself by the blood of his Son, rather than satisfy his justice by our own.

5. It was a love in the *freest manner* ; without cost to us, but expensive to God. We hear of no strug-glings in the heart of God, from the first foundation to the top-stone ; his affections travel through every stage without the least relenting ; he was in Christ reconciling the world, from one end of his counsel to the other, without any repenting reflections. It cost him the blood of his Son, more expensive than the making millions of worlds. There was no need of any combat in his affections, to make as many worlds as he pleased ; but we may wonder, since God represents himself to us often in scripture according to the manner of men, that there were no draw-backs in his affections to the delivering up of his Son. If there be a conflict in his heart, when he is to give up a creature ; *How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim ? how shall I deliver thee, Israel ? my heart is turned within me, Hos. 11. 8* ; could we reasonably suppose less in giving up his Son ? (though indeed the one was eternal, the other temporary) ; yet in this case we read of no such turnings of his heart, no such kindlings of repentings together. His soul was free in it, and let the peace cost what it would, he would procure it, though with the greatest charge.

6. Consider what it was his love *designed in this*. Not a petty inconsiderable thing, but a *propitiation for sin*, 1 John 4. 10, the non-imputation of guilt, the removing all the bars between him and us, the turning the edge of the sword that was pointed against us, reducing us to an eternal amity. He would draw us out of the condition into which we were fallen, and from a wrath we had merited, to elevate us to an eternal life we had rendered ourselves unworthy of, and exposed his Son to the curses of the law, that the edge of them might be turned from us. And that we might have a free converse with him, he makes the Mediator of kin to us, that by reason of the communication of our nature we might with more boldness approach to him. All delightful converse is be-

tween those of the same species ; we could not have conversed freely with a reconciler of a different nature from us.

7. This love is *perpetual*. He was in Christ reconciling the world, he will to the end of the world beseech men to be reconciled to him. Love was the motive, the glory of his grace was the end ; what was so from eternity, will be so to eternity. His love is as strong as it was, for infinite receives no diminution ; his glory is as dear as it was, for to deny his glory is to deny himself. How great will be the joy of those that accept it ! how dismal the torment and sorrow of those that refuse it !

PART XI.

RECONCILIATION WITH GOD A SOURCE OF
COMFORT.

The ground of the believer's consolation—Hosts of heaven at peace with them—Peace with all creatures—Access to God—With confidence—With delight—Sure conquest of Satan—Comfort in affliction—In the expectation of all other mercies—Peace of conscience—In death—Reconciliation is effectual—It is perpetual—Believers happier than Adam in innocence.

II. **USE** of *Comfort*. How great may the joy of believing souls be, to be brought by God, and by ways of his own contriving, into actual favour with him, after they had lain in a state of wrath? To have an almighty, infinite, just God at variance with us, cannot but be a matter of sadness; to have a peace struck, and the light of his countenance shine upon us, cannot but beget a transcendent joy: it is in the very notion of it, to the understanding joyful; yea, tidings of great joy, and in the sense and feeling of it, triumphant. The publication of it was ushered in with words of comfort in the prophet; *Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, speak comfortably to Jerusalem: cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins, Isa. 40. 1.* Three words

to note the great comfort should be taken in the gospel-administration ; the matter of it is the ceasing of the war between God and the creature, the pardon of their iniquities upon the satisfaction of Christ, the fruit whereof is received by the believer : the satisfaction of Christ in regard of the infiniteness of his person, was great, which is expressed by *double* ; and the fruits of it received by the church are great and double, freedom from the wrath of God, from the tyranny of the devil, and the collation of the gifts and graces of the Spirit.

Those words, *For she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins*, cannot be meant of the punishment which they lay under, for that could be no cause of the pardon, as the particle *for* seems to be causal, neither is it a comfort to think of the greatness of punishment after it is past. But if we consider what follows, ver. 3, &c. it will appear to be a gospel promise, and the believer *receives of the Lord's hand double* ; either it is meant of Christ, who made the satisfaction, the fruits whereof the believer receives ; or of the Father, who spared not his own Son, but exacted of him the punishment of our sins, and gives out to us the fruits of his reconciling death. This is the comfort, that the enmity is slain, the war ceased, an end of sin made, and God beheld with comfort, taking away the power of the devil, who first raised this war between God and man ; *Behold, your God ; behold, the Lord God will come with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him, he shall feed his flock as a Shepherd, he shall gather his lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young*, ver. 9, 10 ; all this is the fruit of reconciling grace.

God is well pleased with those that are sprinkled with the blood of Christ. As after the *sprinkling of the blood of the covenant*, God appeared to the elders of the people in a clear, not a cloudy and stormy heaven, *Exod.* 24. 8, 40. A cloudy and stormy heaven is a sign of God's anger, and his feet, the instruments of motion,

standing in a clear heaven, show, that all the passages of his providence to his people, are mercy, truth, and kindness upon the account of the blood of the covenant of peace. God cannot hate those who accept of this reconciliation: though God hates the remainders of sin in them, yet it is not with such a hatred as redounds to their persons, because their persons are reconciled to God; they believe and apply the reconciliation made by God in Christ. If God deny the acceptance of such, he denies his own act and deed, he denies himself and his whole contrivance from one end to the other. This would be to publish, that he was mistaken in his first design, that it was a fruitless thing, that there was a defect in his wisdom laying the scene of it, or a defect in Christ, who undertook to accomplish it, and that things issued not according to his will.

If any accept it upon the terms God offers it, nothing can be charged upon him. God must deny his whole contrivance, his commission to Christ, or find some flaw in the execution of it, before salvation can be denied to such a person; but God hath already testified again and again, how highly pleasing the whole negotiation of Christ was to him, and therefore it is not possible, that God, who cannot be deceived in his foresight of his events, to whom nothing is contingent, it is not possible he should delight in this before it was acted, please himself with it after it was acted, and yet dart out the frowns of an enemy upon the accepters of it, who are called *sons of peace*, *Luke 10. 6*. No, the proper effect of this is non-imputation of sin, as it is in the text, *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses* unto them, and reconciliation and justification are one and the same thing in the apostle's doctrine, *Rom. 5. 9*; what is called justification by his blood, is called *reconciliation to God by the death of Christ*, ver. 10.

Sincere acceptance of it, with a resolution to obey him, gives an interest in this. *Good will towards men*,

Luke 2. 14. Some read it, peace on earth to men of good will, actively that bear a good will to Christ, that are upright in heart towards God in Christ. But the Psalmist is clear in it, that where there is no guile in the spirit in accepting this righteousness, *God will not impute sin, Psal. 32. 2*, and though a believing person may not be sensible of his happiness, yet his happiness is ensured upon faith, though not testified to the soul; reconciliation and the sense of it are two distinct things; a name may be written in the book of life, and the eye not clear enough to discern it. The prince may have a favour for a malefactor, and his pardon sealed too, yet the prisoner know it not, and perhaps have little hopes of it, but casts himself at the foot of the prince's mercy. How comfortable is it to have this peace, and a sense of it too in our consciences, by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus? Worldly goods are small, corn, wine, and oil are little things to the light of God's countenance, shining upon the soul; here is the ground of joy and glorying, that God exerciseth loving kindness; *Let him that glories, glory in this that he knows me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, Jer. 9. 24.*

There are several particular comforts arise from hence.

1. The *angels*, the whole *host of heaven*, are at peace with the believer. The angels, upon the sin of man, by virtue of their obedience, took part with God, and could not, because of their purity, be friends to a defiled creature; nor, because of their affection to God, bear any respect to him to whom the Lord was an enemy: they were placed as a guard to bar man from re-entrance into Paradise after his fall, and to keep the way of the *tree of life*, *Gen. 3. 24*. Our sins broke the alliance between heaven and earth, so that the good angels could have no converse with the enemies of God; had it not been for this disobedience, they could have had no aversion to man. But since their Lord is satisfied, those obedient spirits cannot be discontented; for this reconciliation ties

their hands, and makes all ill intelligence cease between them and believers. * The death of Christ expiating our sin, established a good correspondence between the two great parties of the world, angels and men: the monarch being reconciled, the two states of men and angels reassume a mutual commerce. By this they are reduced into one corporation, into one family, and combined under one head; *All things which are in heaven and on earth, are gathered together in Christ, Eph. 1, 10. It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell, and by him to reconcile all things unto himself, by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven, Coloss. 1. 20;* this place, is understood by some, of the reconciliation of things in heaven to God, i. e. believers in the promised Messiah, who died before the coming of Christ; shewing thereby the extent of the death of Christ which looked backward: by others, of the reconciliation of heavenly spirits unto us, as being a grand state of the world depending upon the universal monarch. Hence the angels rejoice and sing a hymn at the publishing the gospel, *Luke 2. 13,* and rejoice more in it than men do; for they delight in the glory of God, but men delight naturally in their enmity to God; they rejoice at the repentance of a sinner, and his acceptance of this reconciliation. They cannot rejoice at men's reconciliation to God, and be unreconciled themselves. They are *ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, Heb. 1. ult.* instruments of God in the deliverance of his church and people, furtherers of the conversion of men as to outward means, as in the example of the Eunuch, *Acts 8. 26.* And at last, conduct the heirs to the possession of their inheritance *reserved in the heavens for them, Luke 16. 22.* They are ministers of wrath upon the unbelieving world, ministers of good to the believing creature, and guard him with those weapons

* Daille Serm. sur naissance due Seigneur, p. 83.

wherewith they fought against him, from whence we have many invisible assistances.

As God did not hate his creatures as creatures, for then he had hated man as made by him, which is inconsistent with the pure goodness of God, but he hated them as sinners; so the angels followed their great pattern in the hatred of men; but now they are reconciled to man, because God, to whom they pay an obedience, is reconciled. They are put under the government of Christ as their head, as he is the Mediator, and cannot be enemies to us, till Christ as head, become an enemy to himself as Mediator. Their commission for guarding the heavenly paradise against us is cancelled, and should they now obstruct the way, they would be no longer good angels, but impure and disobedient devils. There is one place which some understand of this peace we have with angels.

Peace from him which was, and which is, and which is to come, and from the seven spirits which are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness, &c. Rev. 1. 4, 5. The seven spirits are said to be before his throne, as waiting for the commands of God, as the seven angels are said to *stand before God, Rev. 8. 2.* * But it is more likely it is meant of the Spirit of God; it is not reasonable to think the salutations of creatures to the church should be mixed with the benedictions of the Deity, with the exclusion of the third person, who is here to be understood, and called seven Spirits in regard of the variety of gifts and graces given out by him to the church, seven being a perfect number; and placed in the midst of this benediction, perhaps because of his procession both from the Father and the Son.

2. *Peace with all creatures.* If the Lord of the creation be the author of this peace, then no creatures which are under his conduct can be at enmity with a believer. When Adam fell, he did deserve that all creatures should act in hostility against him, as the

* Hyiricus in locum.

rebel against the sovereignty of their common Creator. But when God enters into a new amity with man, and ceases to be provoked, he renews the covenant with the beasts, that all creatures shall be serviceable to the reconciled believer. *In that day I will make a covenant for him with the beasts of the field, Hos. 2. 18.* In the day of the evangelical espousals, as he had before promised if they continued in obedience, *Lev. 26. 6.* Though no formal covenant can be made between God and irrational creatures, yet they shall hurt no more, than if they were tied up by a formal covenant, and were honest and wise enough to observe it. As in the first covenant made with Adam, while he stood in terms of peace with God, and owned a subjection to him as his Lord, all creatures were spontaneously to be under his dominion, which right depended upon the observance of the terms of the covenant which was between God and him.

This right is renewed by the satisfaction of Christ, procuring the restoration of that which Adam forfeited, and disarming nature which was before armed against man. The corn and the wine shall bear Jezreel the seed of God, *Hos. 2. 22.* The right to all *things present, things to come, life, death*, all intermediate things, is restored by Christ, *1 Cor. 3. 22, 23.* The world, universal nature, *all is yours* for your good, because *you are Christ's* who hath purchased those things, and *Christ is God's*, settled by him in this office for the purchase of them, and accepted by God to that end. The right to all creatures is perfect, the possession ensured in the head who hath taken livery, and seizin of all, and shall be perfect in the members, when there shall be a new heaven and a new earth; all shall be in an harmonious combination for the glory of the believer.

They do yet often *instrumentally* afflict them, but not hurt them : * they hurt the man, not the christian :

* Manton on Jude, p. 92.

they hurt a believer no more than death can, which though it kills him, yet without a sting; they hurt us, yet without a curse; they are in the hand of a reconciled Father, who useth their natural enmity against us for our good; as the shepherd does the curriishness of the dog to reduce the wandering sheep to the fold. The hurts we seem to feel from them, issue in mercy, and are so intended by that reconciled God who guides them; they wound us, and thereby break our imposthumes. The same instrument may convey kindness to a believer, which is a mark of wrath upon an enemy. The same knife, which in the hand of an executioner, may cut off the arm of a malefactor, in the hand of a surgeon may cut off the gangrened member of a patient; the same knife performs a friend's office to the one, and a wrathful to the other. Since we are not perfect in our services of God, we cannot expect the creatures should be perfect in their services of us; as our obedience is only inchoative here, so the performance of God's promises are here in their blade, not in their full harvest.

3. *Access to God* is another comfort arising from hence. As God was in Christ reconciling the world, so he is in Christ giving believers access to him. As he was in Christ reconciling our persons, so he is in Christ receiving our prayers. As Christ made satisfaction for us by his death, so he sweetens our services by his merit. As Christ was the means of our reconciliation, so he is the means of our access: *By whom also we have access*, Rom. 5. 1, 2; the word *also* intimates this freedom of access to be as great a benefit as justification. Though justification is a transcendent mercy, yet it would not compleat the happiness of a creature without communion with God. Peace was not the thing God ultimately aimed at, it was but the medium; he would be our friend, that there might be sweet interviews between him and a believer.

Before, guilt on our side, and justice on God's, stood as bars to our access. Guilty souls cannot

converse with a severe judge, a provoking creature and an offended God can have no commerce; but when the guilt is taken away the distance is removed. How may an humble believing creature come to a reconciled God, whose own heart put him upon laying the foundation of friendship without any desires, or so much as expectations of the creature. We could no more before endure the presence of God than Satan; but by this the bar is taken from us, though not from him. This access is consequent upon this reconciliation.

As there was a communion between God and man in innocence, which was broken off by the entrance of the enmity, so upon the restoration of the friendship there is a renewing of a mutual converse; that as God reveals his gracious will to the soul, the soul puts up holy desires to God; that as God descends to us in Christ, we may ascend through Christ to him in fruitful meditations, and take a delightful view and prospect of God. It was not only peace that Christ came to procure, but also good will: not only to slay the enmity, but to raise an entire and intimate friendship: The message the angels proclaimed, was made up of the one as well as the other; *peace on earth, good will towards men*, Luke 2. 14, *εὐδοκία*, a good pleasure in men.

(1.) Access with *confidence*. We go to our Father who hath had the greatest hand in all this affair. Since he is the author of this peace, what ground of dejection? We have God in Christ to receive us, and Christ by God's order to introduce us. It was the purpose of God and his eternal purpose, that by the faith of Christ, and in him, we should have *boldness and access with confidence*, Eph. 1. 12. *παρρησίαν*. And what higher ground of confidence than the consideration of God's appointing and giving this Mediator to us for that end? How can a faithful, holy, true God deny his own act in denying us, when we come in the way of his own appointment? For since he hath settled such an high priest over his house, we may

well draw near in full assurance of faith, if we *come with sincere* and true hearts, *Heb.* 10. 21, 22, flying with a deep humility to his throne of grace, with a plerophory of faith, a full sail filled by this wind of love : It is not meant of a personal assurance or a *certitudo subjecti*, but *objecti*, a full belief of the doctrine of propitiation, and God's setting forth Christ and preparing him, to take away sin which was the cause of the enmity between God and us; for this is but the use the apostle makes of what he had doctrinally in this point delivered in the foregoing part of the chapter. We may go to God with more confidence upon this account, than Adam could in innocence. He had access to a God of goodness, we to a God of grace ; he could not look upon God as reconcileable if he should sin, God's threatening was a bar to that ; if he knew any thing of God, he knew him to be just and true to his word, from which knowledge arose those terrors of conscience, and his endeavouring to run and hide himself from God : but God in this dispensation hath given us other notions of himself than Adam had, therefore we may go with more confidence than he could, and pour out our souls before him ; *The Lord is my portion, therefore will I hope in him, Lam.* 3. 24. The Lord is my reconciled friend, therefore will I hope in him for the mercy I beg.

(2.) *Delight and joy* in our access. We could not come to him before, no nor think of him without a slavish trembling ; but now we may think of him, and approach to him with joy and comfort, for he deals not with us as an enemy by a strict justice, but as a friend in a way of an obliging mercy. If Adam had a sense that he might fall, he could not come to God without some dejection : The very possibility of falling would not be without fear attending it. But since God was in Christ reconciling the world, we go to him upon the account of an immutable righteousness, a righteousness he settled as an act of grace to us, and security to his own glory : whereas

Adam could approach to him, but upon the account of a mutable righteousness, which might be as the grass standing this day and withered to-morrow.

Our access to God is with a joy in the *hope of the glory of God*, *Rom. 5. 2*, and when we take hold of his covenant, this covenant of peace, we have his word that he will make us *joyful in the house of prayer*, *Isa. 56. 6, 7*, *actively* joyful, full of delight in his service, solacing ourselves in a sweet consideration of the infinite grace of a reconciling God, whereby a transcendent delight is raised in the soul, which is a direct delight in God as the object of faith, discovered in Christ and apprehended by spiritual reason and sense : *passively* joyful, by receiving in his service more of the refreshing waters of life, and being fed with the hidden manna, which God communicates in and by Christ to his friends. And beside, though our services are imperfect, God expects not a perfect obedience from us, but from his Son Christ ; it is a full assurance of faith he expects from us, and a true heart, not a perfect obedience ; his promise gives us joy, though the sense of our imperfections create a sorrow.

Though we cannot delight in ourselves, we may in God, in his promise, in his gracious condescension, in the compensation he hath from his Son for us, in his acceptation of it, and application of it to our souls. You are upon believing, God's friends, not only his servants ; it is Christ's speech to his disciples, *Henceforth I call you not servants, John 15. 15*. It must not be understood of a freedom from all kind of service, which cannot be conferred upon a creature : (it were injustice in God to free a creature from so righteous and noble a virtue, as gratitude to himself : God cannot command a creature not to love him, for he should then command the creature not to love the chief good.) But it is a freedom from a bondage and servile fear in duties, and bringing to a filial and more dutiful manner of service, a service from principles of grace, and encouraged by the views of God's

reconciled face. Service is not excluded by admission to this friendship, but perfected to a more delightful garb. Peace opens the way for a delightful and successful trade, which war and enmity lock up.

4. The *conquest of Satan* is ensured by this. When we are at peace with God, the devils themselves are subject to us. When God was in Christ reconciling the world, he was in Christ *destroying him that had the power of death, Heb. 2. 14*, and bringing Satan under the feet of the Mediator, and the feet of his members. This was the intent of God in the first promise of a Mediator, to destroy him who had infected mankind, and brought death into the world; the bruising *his head* was the design of Christ's mission, *Gen. 3. 15*. That the great incendiary who had broken the league, and set a-foot the rebellion, might feel the greatest smart of it. And ever since it is by the gospel of peace, and the shield of faith, that we are only able to *quench the fiery darts of the wicked*, and make his attempts fruitless, *Eph. 6. 15, 16*, by the reconciliation God hath wrought and published by the gospel. *God as a God of peace shall tread him under the feet of believers, Rom. 16. 20*. Unless he had been a God of peace, we had never been delivered from that jailor who held us by the right of God's justice. And since we are delivered, God as a God of peace will perfect the victory, and make him cease for ever from bruising the heel of the spiritual seed.

As God hath given *peace* in Christ, so he will give the *victory* in Christ. Peace cannot be perfect, till it be undisturbed by invading enemies, and subtle adversaries endeavouring to raise a new enmity. Our Saviour spoiled him of his power upon the cross, and took away the right he had to detain any believer prisoner, by satisfying that justice, and reconciling that God who first ordered their commitment. He answers his accusations as he is an advocate at the right hand of God, and at the last when death comes to be destroyed, and no more to enter into the world, the

whole design of the devil for ever falls to the ground. Since we are at peace with God, while we are here, Satan himself shall serve us ; and the messenger of Satan shall be a means to quell the pride of a believing Paul by the sufficiency of the grace of God, while he fills the heart of an unbelieving Judas with poison and treason against his master.

5. *Comfort* in all afflictions. It is a cordial to cheer in the hottest services and sharpest difficulties. What can the greatest danger signify, while God remains reconciled to the soul in Christ, and the peace remains unbroken ? God thought the promise of it support enough in all the standing punishment Adam was to endure ; he therefore made this promise to him, before he denounced the punishment after the fall. We may as well digest all crosses with this peace purchased, as Adam could do with this peace promised ; God was then in Christ promising it, God hath now been in Christ performing it. The peace as designed, was offered to the ancient Israelites as a ground of joy and relief under their oppressing calamities ; *This man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land, Isa. 9. Mich. 5. 5.* The peace God hath effected in Christ, is a more firm matter of joy under oppressions, by how much the comfort of the performance exceeds the joy of the promise, as the joy of harvest does the joy of seed-time. Mercy was manifested in the making the promise ; truth as well as mercy glorified in the performing. If it were a ground of joy before he wrought it, what a rise is there for a triumphant joy since he hath laid an unalterable foundation for it ?

This was the armour Christ furnished his disciples with against the injuries of the world ; *In me you shall have peace, in the world you shall have tribulation, John 16. 33.* This was thought by our Saviour to be a sufficient defence for his weak disciples against all the furies of men, and rage of devils, an universal remedy against all discouragements. In Christ God smiles, when the world frowns. *Cause thy face*

to shine upon us, is thrice repeated *Psal.* 80. 3, 7, 19, as the chief confidence of a gracious soul under smart distresses. Reconciliation with God changes the nature of every thing that is terrible, dungeons into palaces, and tears into cordials. It is a shield against fears, a treasure against poverty, physic against diseases, security against danger, and life against death. Indeed under sharp afflictions, a believing soul may not have a strength of a faith, to discern God as a Father, from God as a Judge: sense and carnal reason may dispute against faith and stagger it. If he be reconciled, why then does he make me his mark to shoot at? There may be a fatherly displeasure, when there is not a wrathful anger. The satisfaction of justice excludes not the rod of mercy. Justice hath no plea against a believer, because it is satisfied: mercy is the only attribute that orders all for a reconciled person. The visiting the transgression of the seed of Christ with a rod, was knit together with the continuance of God's kindness to them, in the covenant of redemption God made with Christ, *Psal.* 89. 30, 31, 32, 33. Since then, God was in Christ reconciling the world, it is a less thing for him to be in every affliction ordering it for good.

6. Comfort in the expectation of *all other mercies*. If God were in Christ reconciling us to himself, he will be in Christ giving forth all other suitable mercies. If he detains any you seem to want, it is a part of his reconciled wisdom when he sees them not good for you. It is inconsistent with his amity, to withhold any you have real need of; it would not be then a much more, as Christ argues, but a much less; *If you being evil know how to give good things to your children, much more your Father which is in heaven, Matt.* 7. 11; but consider, they are only good things he hath obliged himself to give, and he is the proper judge of what is good, not we ourselves. If, as a God of patience and goodness, he feeds the unclean birds; will he not, as a God of grace and peace in Christ, feed his friends? Will he let them starve while his

enemies fatten? He hath struck a covenant of amity and friendship; what may not be expected from a sincere and powerful friend, and one who made it his business from eternity to be casting about for the working of this peace? If this, which neither men nor angels could have imagined, be effected by his wisdom and grace, all subsequent blessings are far easier to God than this could be; since in this he hath conquered his own affection to his Son, what can remain unconquered by him, which stands in the way of a believer's happiness?

It was a *greater* act to be in Christ reconciling the world, than to be in Christ giving out the mercies he hath purchased. If he hath overcome the greatest bank that stopped the tide of mercy, shall little ones hinder the current of it? Justice and the honour of the law, were the great mountains which stood in the way: since those are removed by a miraculous wisdom and grace, what pebbles can stop the flood to believing souls? If God be the author of the greatest blessings, will he not be of the least? If he hath not spared his best treasure, shall the less be denied? It is the apostle's arguing, *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?* Rom. 8. 32. He cannot but be as free in the least as he was in the greatest; there were more arguments to dissuade him from that, than there can be to stop his hands in other things. If any thing you desire be refused by God, know it is your Saviour's mind you shall not have it, for God would deny him nothing of his purchase. O how little do we live in the sense of those truths, how does our impatience give God the lie, and tell him he is a deadly enemy, notwithstanding his reconciling grace!

7. There will be *peace of conscience*. If God be reconciled, conscience cannot charge. If God be the author of this peace, conscience, God's deputy, cannot keep up an enmity against us, for that must speak as God speaks; peace with the viceroys and

governors, depends upon peace with the prince. The same blood which was sprinkled on the mercy-seat, is sprinkled upon the conscience of the believer. As it procured peace with heaven, it will produce peace in the soul; *Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, Heb. 10. 22.* An evil conscience is an accusing conscience; when sprinkled by this blood, it is an acquitting conscience; not from the facts, but from the guilt of them. Whatsoever hath a power to satisfy God, cannot be invalid to satisfy conscience. Where infinite knowledge can raise no objection, a purblind conscience is too weak to find out any. If God hath been the contriver of this reconciliation, and accepted it as fully finished, conscience must acquiesce. Adam's conscience flew in his face upon his sin, and did not leave quarrelling, till its mouth was stopped with the promise of a reconciler, guilt sets conscience on fire; when the guilt is quenched, conscience must be at ease. Nothing will satisfy conscience, but that which satisfies God; and whatsoever satisfies God, must satisfy conscience; for that acts by commission, and a derived authority. All other things are too weak to take away the conscience of sin; the *blood of bulls and goats* of God's institution could not do it, *Heb. 10. 2,* it is the proper effect of this peace; all the waters in the world cannot quench the flame of conscience, till God be reconciled. The foundation of this peace of conscience, is laid in peace with God, though present actual comfort may not be enjoyed: the day may be clouded, though the winds be still; there may be no storms, yet no sunshine.

8. *Comfort against death.* If God be the author of reconciliation by Christ, then death, which was the fruit of that sin which is now removed, can be no dreadful appearance.† God was in Christ, and is still, conquering his enemies, and this is one enemy which must fall under his sword, and be made his footstool. As God was in Christ reconciling you, he is in death calling for you to enjoy the full-blown felicities of

that peace. It is no more than a departure in peace when God is a God of peace: old Simeon thought so, *Luke* 2. 29. He speaks, saith one, * like a merchant that had got all his goods on ship-board, and now desires the master of the ship to hoist sail, and be gone homeward. Death was before a servant of divine justice; since justice is satisfied, it is the messenger of divine mercy. It was a jailer to inclose us in the prison of the grave, it is now a conductor to the glories of heaven. Where this peace is in maturity; where God's face shines clearly without disguises, veils, and cloudy interruptions, the term Death is terrible, but the reconciled soul is beyond the fears of it. It hath lost its sting, which was God's justice: Christ satisfying the one, hath disarmed the other of what is hurtful. There is a close, an inseparable union between justification, which is termed reconciliation, and glorification; death comes between them, but does not dissolve it; *Whom he justifies, them also he glorifies, Rom.* 8. 30; which knot cannot be untied by death, though that between our soul and body is; it sends the body to the grave to endure the sentence against sin denounced in Paradise, and the soul to heaven, to enjoy the benefit of the promise.

9. This reconciliation is *effectual*. It is upon this all the other comforts depend. If God was the author of it, contriving, counselling Christ to effect it, furnishing him for the accomplishment of it, it cannot be a weak and imperfect peace; infinite wisdom would not have spent innumerable *thoughts, which cannot be reckoned up*, as the expression is, *Psa.* 40. 5, about a fruitless thing, a peace which might be easily blown away; he would never have sent his Son to shed his blood, and endure his wrath to no purpose, and make his own contrivance to end in a mere *chimera*, as though he would be so busy only to deceive his creatures. *The counsel of the*

Lord shall stand; every counsel of his, much more his choicest purpose, to which all his other resolves are as small rivers which run into this great sea, and combine together for the perfecting this counsel: all other thoughts are lines drawn to or from this centre. As all things in heaven and earth are gathered in one even in Christ; so all the counsels of God gather into this one of Christ, and peace in him, this was the great source and pattern of all the rest, *Eph.* 1. 10, 11. Besides, God hath received this Reconciler into heaven, whereby he hath removed all ground of suspicion of his remaining yet unreconciled.

If justice had any exception against his sacrifice, it would not have opened heaven's gates to Christ, but have barred with a flaming sword Christ's entrance into heaven as well as Adam's return to Paradise. The honourable title of our peace, had not been conferred upon Christ, had an imperfect reconciliation been all the fruit of his blood. By this name he is called, *Mich.* 5. 5. *Eph.* 2. 14, and by that of our righteousness, *Jer.* 33. 16. God is the Author, and Christ the Prince of peace, the reconciliation must be full, and righteous, and effectual, that hath such a contriver, such a procurer. We are apt in our unbelieving modes to suspect God; because we have been unfaithful to him, we are jealous he will be unfaithful to us; but he asks the question, *What could I have done more for my vineyard?* He appeals to men in that case, as if he should say, if men can tell me what I can do more, I will do it: do it to engage them, do it to encourage them: he hath contrived it with the choicest wisdom, laid the foundation of it in the richest blood, given the fullest assurances of his sincerity in it, and never refused it to any that desired it; but it hath been rejected by many whom his Spirit hath solicited. Christ, whose honour lay upon it, would never have assured his disciples of it, after his return from Paradise; *Peace be unto you, John*

20. 21, had it been imperfect; a salutation he used, which is not recorded to be used by him in the time of his life.

10. This reconciliation is *perpetual*, as well as perfect and effectual: it is durable and fixed. It was an eternal redemption obtained. * Eternal in regard of its efficacy, eternal in regard of application, eternal in regard of the good things procured for us by it. Man nor devils cannot undo it, because of their weakness, nor God because of his faithfulness. It is a *grace wherein we stand by faith*, *Rom. 5. 1, 2*, not a tottering, but stable grace. Believers are received into the grace of God's good will, and God is not a light and unstable friend. All human friendship is perfidiousness in respect of this. The *tie* is everlasting, and knows no dissolution. His own grace and good-will moved him to it, and the same good-will in an immutable God, will preserve it. Good-will made the motion, justice acquiesced in it; but since the death of Christ, the righteousness and mercy of God join hand in hand to keep it intire: *Righteousness and peace have kissed each other, mercy and truth have met together*, and congratulated one another for their mutual satisfaction.

The mercy of God is as prevalent with him to keep the covenant of peace from being removed, as for the first settlement of it; *Neither shall my covenant of peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee, Isa. 54. 10*. Such consultations, such expensive accomplishments of it, cannot be mutable; mercy made it, and mercy perpetuates it. He can no more condemn a believing soul when he looks upon Christ, than he can drown the world against his own promise when he looks on the rainbow. His throne is encompassed with a rainbow, an emblem of a perpetual peace: it was so encircled in Ezekiel's time, *Ezek. 1. 28*, with the same garb he appeared to John some ages after, *Rev. 4. 3*, and the predo-

* Ilyric. in loc. Heb. 9. 12.

minant colour was green, that of an emerald, to note that this peace is always green and flourishing, as fresh in after ages as in the first. God was in Christ reconciling the world, God is in Christ as a priest keeping up that reconciliation: the intercession of Christ, which is a part of his priestly office, was as much in the thoughts of God, for his keeping firm this reconciliation, as the death of Christ was upon his heart to effect it. He confirms his eternal priesthood by an oath, *Psa.* 110. 1, and therefore his intercession for it; otherwise there would be no priestly act for Christ now to perform.

Christ by his death quenched the flame of the sword which guarded Paradise against us; at his resurrection he sheathed the sword itself; and by his intercession keeps it perpetually in its scabbard; keeps the edge from ever being turned against a believer. Reconciliation is wrought by the death of Christ, and preserved by his merit. Christ's affections remain in his heart to solicit, the Father's affections remain in his heart to grant, Christ hath an irrepealable liberty to approach to God to present his reconciling merit. Till therefore the unchangeable God change his resolution, and repent of all his counsel, cares, furniture, commission, and acceptance of Christ; till Christ's merit become invalid, distasteful, and nauseous to the Father, this peace will stand firm. Christ's merit hath been paid, it cannot be unpaid; it hath been accepted, it cannot now be refused. If the soul he hath redeemed be not safe, Christ can have no satisfaction for all his sufferings. Keep therefore your wills from sin, strive against the motions of it, agree not with it, and the peace will not be broken. As princes enter not into war, but where there is a real affront done, and no satisfaction given; so God breaks not the peace he hath made, upon every failing. When the will is not engaged, the sin is resisted; but where any give up their wills to sin, and delightfully wear its chains, they are so far from having this reconciliation perpetual, that they never had so much as the least

interest in it. It is perpetual to them that embrace it, not by a pretended faith, but a real and obedient faith.

11. The state believers have by this reconciliation is far happier *than that of Adam in innocence*. It is likely, had he persisted in it sometime, he might have been confirmed in that state; but how long time he might have lived in that mutable condition, and whether if he had persisted, he would have enjoyed such a degree of glory, is not upon record. God was in Adam making a covenant of *works*, he is in Christ making a covenant of *peace*. Christ came not only to give a simple life, or a simple *peace*, but to give it *more abundantly*, *John* 10. 10, more abundantly than we had it by creation in innocence. After the Fall we were dead, and Christ restored us to life, but to a more abundant life; not that we had after the Fall, for we had none at all, we were dead in trespasses and sins; but more abundantly than we had in Adam before the Fall; a better life than man could challenge by the covenant of works. The second creation must be greater than the first, because the thoughts of God about the first, were but a step to a second. In the first creation, mere man was the head, God in him gave out the precepts and promises to his posterity; in the second creation, God is in Christ giving out his covenant; as the means of conveyance are higher, so the things conveyed are more glorious. God would provide a way of peace that should not fail again, the security should be built upon a firmer foundation. The Lord give every one of us an interest in this reconciliation and the comforts of it.

PART XII.

EXHORTATIONS.

Something must be done by those who are reconciled to God—Faith a necessary qualification—God accepts Christ, and believers in him—Various motives—Enmity with sin—Industry and affection in the service of God—Approaches to him, attended with a sense of reconciliation—Expecting all grace from God in Christ—Our resource under prevailing corruption of deformed nature—Should be contented in all conditions—And be reconciled to others—God glorified for our reconciliation.

III. **USE** of Exhortation. Is God in Christ reconciling the world, then it is fit we should join issue with God, and be in Christ reconciled to him. We must comply with God in this his great ordinance. The consideration of it should work relenting, should work believing. Let the design of God prevail with us. It is in this we shall find expiation of sin, the grace of God, peace of conscience ; in a word, whatsoever God as reconciled can give, whatsoever Christ as reconciling hath purchased. Better to be the vilest slave in the galleys, the scoff and reproach of men, spurned by every foot, than be unreconciled. It was tender mercy, whereby the day spring from on high

hath visited us, Luke 1. 7, 8. When we lay wallowing in a miry sink, ready to be crushed by God's righteous hand, then he pitied us; the more disingenuous to refuse his amity. The dignity of the donor renders a gift more valuable than it is in itself; a present from a prince is more prized than that which is bestowed by an ordinary merchant. The gift of Christ, and the offer of peace by him, is incomprehensible in itself, and receives a value from that God that prepared and offers it. What pleasure can we taste in any earthly comfort, though we had a confluence of all princely delights, if we have no share in a reconciled God, by a reconciling Mediator; while we will force that God, who is the author of peace, to stand over us with a drawn sword pointed to our breasts? Corn, wine, and oil are little things to the light of God's countenance.

1. Something must be *done* on our parts. Though God be the author of our reconciliation by Christ, yet something is incumbent upon us. If all men were reconciled, without any condition on their parts, the apostle might have held his pen, and not have added the other clause, after the text, *we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God*, ver. 20; there had been no need of that inference. In the text he speaks of the fundamental reconciliation; in this, of the actual. If all men had been reconciled to God, it had not been sense to say, you are reconciled, therefore be reconciled. It would have been an exhortation to do that which had been already done to their hands. If all men be actually reconciled, how come any to miss of the fruit of it? Why is it not applied to all? Because all that are called, do not comply with their call, answer not God's command and intreaty. The purchase and application are two distinct things: the purchase was made by Christ alone upon the cross, without any qualification in us; the application is not wrought without something in us concurring with it, though that also is wrought by the grace of God.

God hath ordained peace for us. But there is a work to be wrought within us, for the enjoyment of that peace; *Lord thou wilt ordain peace for us, for thou also hast wrought all our works in us, Isa. 26. 12.* The one is grace in the spring, the other is grace in the vessel: the one is the act of God in Christ, the other is the act of God by his Spirit. Though the fire burn, if I would have warmth, I must not run from it, but approach to it.

2. This qualification is *faith*. As grace in God qualified God, if I may use the expression, for effecting, so faith in us qualifies us for applying and enjoying it. Though Christ be the purchaser, yet faith is the means of instating us in it; *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. 5. 1.* Not a man hath peace with God, till justified by faith. This inestimable mercy is not conferred, but upon men of good will; men that affect it, value it, consent to it. We must lay our hands upon the head of the sacrifice, and own him for ours. This is the band which unites us to Christ as the purchaser, and by him to God, as the author of this reconciliation; it gives us a right to this peace, and at last the comfort of it.

3. The order is, *first an acceptance of Christ, then of God* in and through him. We must first comply with the means, before we can attain the end. Our nearness to God was purchased by the blood of Christ, and is actually conferred by union with Christ. *But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ, Eph. 2. 13.* Faith hath recourse first to the atoning blood of Christ, and by that blood to God. *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, Rom. 3. 25.* This blood only quenched the consuming fire of God's wrath. By him we are reconciled, and by him only we can receive the atonement. *We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement, Rom. 5.*

11. As God was in Christ reconciling, so we must be in Christ accepting this reconciliation with God. *Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's, 1 Cor. 3. 23.* We must first be Christ's by the acceptance of him, as Christ was God's by his calling and mission. As God goes out to us in him, our return must be by him to God. He paid the debts, made an end of sin, removed the wrath which we had merited. God was the Judge, Christ the Mediator: we must first go to the Mediator to be conducted by him to the Judge. We had offended the law-maker, we must first go to him who is the repairer of the honour of the law; we must take the redemption of Christ along with us, the pacifying blood to present it to God, by whose authority we were under wrath. It is that blood only joins us to God, no cement without it. If we are not first by faith in Christ satisfying, we are still but as stubble before God, who is a consuming fire. Christ is the only band of union between us and God. Think not of standing secure by absolute mercy, mercy through Christ only saves us. It breathes in no other air. We must first take hold of the strength of God, before we are at peace with him. *Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me, Isa. 27. 5:* of Christ, who is as well the *power of God, as the wisdom of God, 1 Cor. 1. 24,* where you have a direction, how to gain it, by laying hold of his strength; the end to be aimed at in the act, *that he may make peace with me;* and an assurance to obtain it in that method, *he shall make peace with me.*

Motives,

[1.] Here is the *highest encouragement*, and ground of acceptation. There is no room for any hard thoughts of God after so signal a discovery of himself: he is not a God of unquenchable wrath; he was willing his justice should be appeased: he took all the course that was possible for infinite wisdom to invent, for infinite power to effect, for infinite love to propose. What greater security for our blessings,

than that he should make his son a curse, that we might be blessed by him? How should so much love make us change our unworthy opinions of God? Here are the three persons employed in it, the Father contrives it, the Son effects it, the Spirit stands ready to apply it to every believer. A refusal puts a scorn upon all the three persons. As soon as ever Adam sinned, even the *same day*, Gen. 3. 15, God applies this remedy of a Redeemer. He did not let a day slip, for any thing we know, not an hour, before he made it known to him; his heart was in travail, and longed to be delivered of the gracious promise of a Mediator. He armed our first parents with this cordial before he subjected them to their standing miseries.

What his heart was then, it is *the same still*. His kindness was desirous to publish the promise, can his truth have less zeal to perform it? His kindness which moved him to assure it, hath moved him to effect it, and will move him to apply it to every one that seeks to him for it, in and by his beloved Son. His wrath which we were subject to, is overcome by his love to the mediation of his Son, who hath honoured him more than sin hath dishonoured him. By accepting this, we own the glory of God, and honour him as much by faith, as we have dishonoured him by sin; for thereby we own that satisfaction which was as grateful to him, as our sins were hateful. As he honoured himself by the death of his Son, so he honours himself by giving forth the fruits of his death. He delights to honour Christ, and to see him honoured by us: we contribute to God's delight, when we approach to him by faith in his blood. Did God make this provision? Did he contrive an expiatory offering before the world was? And will he not communicate this? Would he provide him never to bestow him? Did he bruise him for nothing, but to keep him up as a jewel in a cabinet, not to give out? To whom should God give him, but to those that desire him? Would any Father lay up

treasures for his children, and not dispense them, when they are earnest for them in their necessities? Can there be a greater argument than this doctrine, to overcome our rebellion, extinguish our fears, hasten our approach, and add confidence to our desires.

[2.] The terms required, are as *low* as can be imagined. Nothing can be objected against the conditions he requires, repentance and faith. Can any malefactor expect peace with his arms in his hand? Is it not fit there should be such conditions to justify God, since we were the guilty offenders? Can there be less, than to cast away our weapons, bewail our crimes, receive his Son as our Mediator, serve him with newness of life, all which are desirable privileges? It was in his power to appoint what conditions he pleased, because he was the free and sole benefactor: what could be less, than the believing and receiving the reconciliation? It was impossible the benefit could be without it: it is no benefit unless it be esteemed so; no reason any should enjoy a benefit, that does not think it a benefit. All the self-love of men could not have framed more reasonable terms. Men would have thought of *rivers of oil, and thousands of rams*, mere impossibilities, *Mic. 6. 6, 7.* God requires no more, than to lie humbly at his feet, and reach out our hands to receive the assurance he gives. What can be easier? If faith be difficult, it is so, not in regard of itself, but in regard of our natural enmity to God, and the pride of our own wills; it is hard only as *the law is weak through the flesh*, *Rom. 8. 3.* But nothing could be more reasonable, nothing more easy in itself. An ingenuous amazement at unexpected kindness, should make us run more swiftly to embrace God, than ever we ran from him. We should subscribe to his articles. As he is a God to contrive the peace, let him be your God to impose the methods of enjoying it, since he hath given this gift to a brutish world, who he knew would grieve and despise him, yet requires no more at your hands, than that you should believe and accept

him, which is but a just due to the greatness of the blessing.

[3.] There is an *absolute necessity* for this compliance for our happiness. If you have not a peace of God's ordaining, you can have none of your own inventing. There can be no fellowship with God without it: we cannot be happy, because we cannot enjoy God, wherein all the felicity of a creature consists: How can guilt and purity converse together? What society can stubble have with fire, but to its destruction? We cannot see God's face without it; and if the sight of God's face be wanting, felicity is at a distance. The greatest part of hell remains, though there be no positive punishment. This cannot be without a reconciled face. *How can two walk together, unless they be agreed? Amos 3. 3.* What intercourse can there be between a guilty rebel and a frowning judge? Between a sinful creature, and a provoked Deity? *If he hide his face, who can behold him? Job 24. 29.* But when an agreement is made, there may be mutual endearments. We are enemies to God by birth, God an enemy to us by his law; the enmity will remain on God's part, while enmity remains on ours. Strike up then the treaty with God, since there is a necessity for it, and God hath provided all things to that end; shall not God's love melt you, and your own necessities move you?

[4.] Wrath is *unavoidable* without a compliance with God. If we will not enter into these terms of reconciliation, the heart of God which was before incensed by our sin, cannot but rise with an higher indignation at a resolve to persist in it. Abused love kindles the hottest wrath. What fence can inexcusable guilt have against an equitable justice? When man after his creation proved perfidious to God, there commenced a dreadful war, which only can be ended by him, who hath put an end to sin, or else it will endure for ever in hell. All must have endured what Christ suffered, had he not stood in their stead; and those that refuse him, as he is proffered by the

grace of God, must endure the same for ever. If we will not receive him as a friend, we cannot avoid him as an enemy; his eye will behold us, *and his hand will reach us, in the thickest coverings of the darkness, Psal. 139. 9, 11.*

Where he is not *accepted* as the author of reconciliation in his own way, he will be the author of judgment in his own way. If the satisfaction of his justice which he hath provided, be slighted, that justice will be satisfied upon our own persons. If we deny him his honour by the sufferings of Christ, he will vindicate it by the sufferings of our own persons. The law was in full force against us, whereby God hath obliged himself to inflict death upon the sinner, *Gen. 2. 17.* It is his law upon record, that damnation shall be inflicted upon every one that believes not. There is no discovery out of Christ, but of wrath prepared *against the day of wrath*: the day wherein God and his unreconciled enemies shall meet together, is called a *day of wrath*, *Rom. 2. 5, 6*; a day wherein there shall be an appearance of wrath only to such. The angel that hath a *rainbow* about *his head*, hath *feet as pillars of fire*, *Rev. 10. 1*, to consume them that refuse the peace.

Consider then, we are sunk under infinite guilt, and cannot rise up without an Almighty hand; we are universally defiled by sin, and cannot be cleansed without infinite purity; sin is strong in its accusations, our righteousness imperfect in its defence, and can make no compensation for the wrongs by the other: our duties are impure, and are not fit for a pure eye. An eternal weight of wrath is due to all those; there is but one way to escape which God hath provided. But one city of refuge whereby we may escape the edge of the revenging sword: The sword of divine justice reaches all that are without this shelter, touches none that are under Christ's wings, but like a consuming fire devour every thing else. We cannot perpetuate the war against him, but to our own sorrow; one

spark of wrath will be enough to consume stubble; death will put a period to all treaties.

[5.] All other ways of reconcilment are *insufficient*. To pretend to any other ways, is an injury to divine wisdom, as though his contrivance were not sufficient for the creature's restoration and support; divine mercy will receive no man in its arms with a wrong to any one attribute, nor to the dishonour of Christ. It will therefore never receive any who denies Christ and the efficacy of his priesthood. Men naturally are studious of making God compensation, applauding themselves in their own inventions, and satisfactions of their own coining, unwilling to acquiesce in the wisdom and will of God. The two great things God would advance in the world by this grace, is his wisdom and authority: these are the things men oppose, his wisdom by the pride of reason, his authority by the perversity of will. But consider, do we need reconciliation or no? If we need it not, how came we friends with God since we were born enemies? if we do need it, is it not safer to enter into the terms God hath proposed, wherewith he is satisfied, than to stand to our false, or at best but uncertain methods?

The *safest* way is always the choice of wise men: let us not be fools then in refusing the gospel method, unless we can meet with any thing that hath as fair a plea to divine revelation. Had we all the angels on our side, and all the men on earth to intreat for us, it would be ineffectual. God never was in them reconciling the world: this one Mediator whom God hath appointed, hath done and can do that, which neither men upon earth, nor angels and saints in heaven, can do by their joined intercessions. Place no confidence then in your own humiliations, services, duties, God never was in those reconciling any man: all that is done without faith, is but enmity, and that in the best part, your minds, *Rom.* 8. Whatsoever fair colours they are painted with, they cannot please God. The scripture settles an impossibility on the head of all

them; *Without faith it is impossible to please God, Heb. 11: 6*, to gain or keep his favour. Were your righteousness of the highest elevation, it is but a creature, and therefore not the object to trust. Though Adam, while he continued in his natural righteousness, might have entered it as a plea, yet because mutable, it was no fit object of trust for him. But since the Fall, all pleas of a fleshly corrupted righteousness are overruled in the court of heaven.

Absolute mercy *without faith* in Christ cannot save you. As God could not, after the sanction of the law, in regard of his truth, pardon the violations of it without a satisfaction, so since he hath settled the way of reconciliation by faith in the blood of Christ, he cannot upon the same score of his truth, save any in a way of absolute mercy; especially when that way which he hath appointed, is refused. As it would be against his truth, against his justice, so also against the honour of his obedient Son; for if he be at peace with one man by absolute mercy, why might he not, upon the same terms, have reconciled others, and then what need of the sufferings of his only Son to make up the breach? If any thing else therefore be chosen as the way of this peace, God at the hour of judgment may remit us to our righteousness, services, carnal confidences, saying, go to the reconcilers that you have chosen, and see whether they can make your peace; as he did to the Israelites; *Go cry to the gods which you have chosen, let them deliver you, Judges 10: 14*; a dreadful, but a just speech.

[6.] God *seeks* it at our hands, and is *willing* to receive us. He is not only a God in Christ reconciling the world, but he is a God in his ambassadors intreating: *As though God himself did beseech you by us*, ver. 20, after the text. This is the tenor of his proclamation, *be you reconciled to God*. If he had not desired it, he would not have spent so many thoughts about it, and been at such expence to effect it. He was not bound to it; for he might have

left Adam to sink into the death he had merited, without exposing his Son to a death he had not deserved, and contracted a necessity of, only as our surety : he was no more bound to seek out Adam and make him a promise of redemption, than he was bound to make him a creature. He might have raised a new world, and have filled it with new inhabitants.

It must be something of a *vast concern* to us, that God hath been so busy about, and so desirous of our acceptance of. Does God seek to us to receive wealth and worldly honours ? No ; this therefore must be a thing of higher value. A God seeks to us, who is infinitely more glorious than we are vile : a God who never did us the least wrong, but hath borne with many injuries from us : a God who could as easily send us into hell with his breath, as breathe out a kind invitation to us : a God who needs our friendship no more than he fears our enmity : a God no more benefited by it, than the sun by darting a beam upon a grain of sand. Sure that soul never was sensible of the misery his war with God hath sunk him into, who refuses to receive the peace he offers : nor can, without an inconceivable shame, look God in the face at the last day after so notorious a rejecting an intreating God.

He seeks it *this day*, perhaps he will not seek it at our hands *to-morrow*. There is a *day* wherein we may *know the things that concern our peace*, *Luke 19, 41*. When the day is over, peace will not return. There is a day wherein he will pour out his wrath upon the unbelieving world : while he is yet a great way off, and his thunder at a distance, he sends an embassy of peace, *Luke 14. 33*. He yet seeks to his sworn enemies, and those that were in league with Satan : you may be in league with me, I have not yet shut the door. Listen, do you not hear God's voice in the gospel ? he shuts out none that do not shut out themselves. What a guilt will the refusal amount to, when we are to answer for not only the first publica-

tion, but repeated offers? Besides he is willing to receive us into favour, more willing to embrace us than we to receive him.

The eternal motions in his heart which gave birth to this gracious design, are of the same force, and strength *still*: he can never forget them. As the remembrance of the years of the right hand of the Most High is our comfort in times of trouble, so God's *remembrance of the years of his own right hand*, the workings of his own heart, hath the like force to excite him to a reception of us, as they had to commission Christ for us. He never broke his word; and less will he do it at the close of all, when his people are almost gathered, the world near its period, and the proclamation of the gospel ready to be taken down and folded up for ever: he will not at the end be worse than he hath been all along. Let us be as willing to be at peace with him, as he is to be at peace with us. God sets us a pattern, he seeks to us, it is an imitation of God to seek to him.

2d Exhortation. Is God in Christ reconciling the world, then we must be at *enmity with sin*. God was in Christ reconciling sinners, not sin. God and sin are irreconcilable enemies, so that where there is a peace with one, there must be a war with the other. Fire and water may sooner agree than God and sin, than a peace with God and a peace with sin. The traitor may be reconciled to the prince, and the treason as hateful to him as before. This is the best evidence to any that he is actually reconciled, when he hates that which made the first separation. Christ expiated sin, not encouraged it; he died to make your peace, but he died to make you holy; *To purify a people to himself*, Tit. 2. 14. The design of God in the manifestation of Christ in the flesh, was *to destroy the works of the devil*, 1 John 3. 8. The chief work of the devil, was to enter man in a league with himself, and rebellion against God. God aimed at the death of our sins, when he aimed at the life of our souls. The ends of Christ's death

cannot be separated; he is no atoner, where he is not a refiner. It is as certain as any word the mouth of God hath spoken, that *there is no peace to the wicked*. A guilty conscience, and an impure, will keep up the amity with Satan, and enmity with God. He that allows himself in any sin, deprives himself of the benefit of reconciliation. This reconciliation must be mutual; as God lays down his wrath against us, so we must throw down our arms against him. As there was a double enmity, one rooted in nature, another declared by wicked works; or rather, one enmity in its root, and another in its exercise, *Col. 1. 21*, so there must be an alteration of state, and an alteration of acts.

The end of Christ's death was to reconcile God to us, and bring us back to God: we are not therefore at *peace with him*, unless we be transformed into the image of his Son. How can we expect to be taken into the bosom of God, when we every day wilfully defile our souls? Can familiarity with God be kept up, when daily bars are laid in the way? Why was God in Christ reconciling the world? Because he was a holy, as well as a gracious God; and to show his detestation of sin, as well as his affection to the creature. Shall this encourage any practice against the holiness of God? God is of as pure eyes, and can as little endure to behold iniquity, since the reconciliation, as before.

God was *sanctified* in Christ when he was reconciling the world in him, and he will be sanctified in us if we have interest in this reconciliation. All God's acts about Christ are the highest obligation to be at enmity with that, for which the Son of God was appointed, and made a sacrifice: to receive encouragement from hence to sin more freely, is to act the part of Judas with God's grace, and betray it to serve our lusts. Be afraid therefore to offend God, not so much because of his power to hurt you, as because of his love whereby he hath obliged you. The peace was broken by the disobedience of Adam: it

was restored by the obedience of Christ. But our obedience is necessary to the joyful fruits of it. *Great peace have they which love thy law, Psal. 119. 165.*

3. Be *industrious* and *affectionate* in the service of God. Hath God been in Christ reconciling the world, manifesting his desire for it, and affection to it, by such various acts; and shall we put God off with a little service, who hath not put us off with a scanty grace? God hath done his utmost to engage our affection, and encourage us in the choicest services: there could not be an higher way to procure it, and deserve it of us. The view of the creatures, and God's goodness in them, raises a common love to God in the more ingenuous natural minds. To what heights should our love ascend, who have such steps to mount by? A weak love is less than is due to him, who hath discovered such an immensity to us. Shall we return not a drop, or but a drop, for an ocean? How much should we think ourselves obliged to a prince, who should but stop a torrent of legal penalties deserved by us? God hath done this and more. How should we combine all our thoughts and affections together to serve that God acceptably, who hath made all his thoughts conspire to reduce us honourably and successfully? *I am the Lord thy God which hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage*, is the preface to the decalogue, as an incitement of them to a choice respect to all his precepts. "I am the God reconciling you in Christ," is the tenor of the gospel; and much more an incitement to service, by how much the deliverance in the antitype exceeds that in the type; this being spiritual and eternal, that temporal.

If you are actually reconciled, *serve God as your friend*. As God hath given you an higher state, give him a greater honour. Do all things out of love to God as reconciled, without any base ends and sordid designs. God had no other end in being the Author of peace, but his own glory, and your good; have then

no other end, but God's glory in your own welfare, advancing further to him, and enjoying his reconciled favour. Serve him with a delight in him; a dull slavish spirit becomes not any in his approach to so hearty a friend. Every duty should be performed with a triumph and glory in the God of salvation; *I will joy in the God of my salvation, Hab. 3. 18.* God would then delight in us; next to the delight he hath in his reconciled Son, he hath the choicest delight in his reconciled servants, and services springing up from a sense of his love to them.

4. Let all our approaches to God be *begun* and *attended* with a sense of this. God in all his communications to his people acted as a reconciled God: we should eye him so in all our approaches to him. As there is not one mercy, one act of grace God shows to us, but springs from this restored affection; so not any duty we offer up to God, but should rise from a sense of it: whatsoever is not by and through Christ, is not accepted as a duty. This consideration before all addresses, would animate them with all those graces necessary to be acted in them. It would make us humble to consider what we were, and how freely God reduced us. It would make us believing with an holy boldness; what despondency can there be, when God hath given so many tokens of his heartiness in it? It would make us earnest: it would be a fetching fire from heaven for the inflaming our souls. Earnestness is grounded upon hope; what greater foundation for hope, than the consideration that this was God's sole act? Think before every duty, of the great love God bears to Christ as Mediator, greater than to all men and angels; this will be a ground of confidence. For the love of God to Christ as Mediator, was with respect to all that believe in him. Think much of the virtue of Christ's death, wherewith he sprinkled the throne of God, and turned the seat of justice into a throne of grace. It is the best way to receive answers; by pleading this, we mind God of all his engagements. Every

act about Christ is an argument fit to be used in prayer. God will never deny his own acts, nor the ends of them, which was to make a way for communicating himself to his creatures. God is only in Christ entertaining us, as well as reconciling us. Let us not lift up an eye to him without faith in him as a God in Christ, and carry this atoning blood in the hands of faith in every act of communion with him.

5. Look for *grace* and *spiritual strength* from God in Christ. The conduit of mercy and grace is un-stopped by Christ to flow freely down to man. This is the foundation of the regeneration of any soul; *All things are become new, and all things are of God who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 5. 17, 18.* Having spoken of the new creation, ver. 17, he lays down the true cause, God; the foundation, the reconciliation by Christ. All things are of God, all the powerful effects and operations of the gospel in the hearts of men are from God as a reconciler by Christ, not from God as creator. The deep meditation of and closing with the promise of God in and through Christ brings grace into the heart, not a consideration of God's precepts, but of God's promises. The application of the reconciling love of God in Christ by faith, is attended with a powerful benediction of the Spirit, pulling up the foundations of the enmity on our parts; the Spirit is received by the preaching of the gospel, the meditations of the gospel, the applications of the gospel; the Spirit is conveyed with those, not with the precepts of the law, *Gal. 3. 5.* Men begin at the wrong end, they would rise from obedience to faith, and deal with God as if he were to be appeased and satisfied by them. But begin at faith, a firm assent, a full consent to the gospel, and the offers of redemption, and go down by virtue of that to obedience; it is by casting ourselves upon God in Christ, that we receive vigour for all spiritual obedience.

The spirit of *holiness* is the principle whereby we obey, not the effect of our obedience. Christ is first redemption, then sanctification. God is a *God of peace*, and then a God of grace; we should look upon God as a God of peace, and under that title implore him for increase of habitual grace. As a God of peace, he works in us that which is *well pleasing in his sight*, *Heb.* 13. 20, 21. Our sanctification depends upon our justification. God promised to be as a dew to his people under the gospel, *Hos.* 4. 5. Dew descends from a clear sky, and grace from a reconciled God. As God in Adam had conveyed a natural righteousness to his posterity, had Adam stood; so God in Christ only conveys a spiritual righteousness to Christ's spiritual offspring.

6. When any *rising of enmity* is in the soul, *go to God in Christ*. As God was in Christ reconciling the world, so he is in Christ reconciling a soul after the re-admission of guilt through temptation. Not that the guilt of the whole mass of sins of a believer returns upon his fall; but a particular guilt of that sin he hath committed lies upon him, for which he must have a fresh application of reconciling mercy. He must go to God in Christ for this; as the first application was made in and through Christ, so must the second, and third, as often as we need it, even in our daily pardons. Christ sits an officer in heaven to this purpose, and God hath constituted him an officer to this end, and is in him in his intercession accepting it, as well as in his first satisfaction. The Corinthians to whom the apostle writes, some of them at least, were reconciled, yet he beseeches them to be reconciled to God, i. e. renew their reconciliation upon every new breach, and regain the favour of God which they had forfeited by their sins, for which he had reproved them in the former epistle. This must be sued out every day. What was the foundation of the first peace, is the foundation of the renewals of it: the same course you

took at the first, will be successful for the second. God was not out of Christ in the first, and he will not be out of Christ, whenever there is any need. As God was willing and desirous to make reconciliation by the blood of Christ, when all your sins lay before him with their crimson aggravations, much more will he renew it upon a particular fall. But he may hide his face, till you sue out a pardon upon his own proclamation, and contrivance; and if it be a presumptuous sin, he may deny you the comfort of this peace a long time, perhaps as long as you live. Let not any presume upon this, for it belongs not to any man that lives in a course of known sin, which is inconsistent with a reconciled state.

7. How *contented* should those that are reconciled be in every condition? The peace of God should bear *rule in our hearts*, to compose them upon any emergency, *Col. 3. 15.* This will keep the *heart and mind* from solicitousness, *Phil. 4. 6, 7*; this will make us despise the promises of the world alluring us, and the threatenings of the world to scare us. This peace should be the guard of our souls, and will render us happy, when the world may account us most miserable, and therefore should render us contented. If you would not have the riches and honours of the world without it, you may well bear the scorns and reproaches of the world with it. The whole world could not secure you, if you had a war with God, nor defend you from the arrows of his wrath. But since you have peace with God, you are mounted above the enmities of the world, and your spirits should be guarded by it from any tumultuous passions. If the wrath of God be ceased towards us, we may well bear the strokes of a Father, since we are not like to feel his sword as Judge. How cheerfully may we embrace the afflicting hand of God, when he is at peace with us? Look upon all your mercies too, though they are of a meaner kind outwardly than others, as flowing from this fountain, which may make

you not only contented with them, but highly value them. It gives a sweeter relish to mercy than Adam could have: he had the goodness of God, but not the goodness of a reconciled Father, while he was in innocence. If this makes heaven the sweeter, it should make mercies here more savoury.

8. Let us then be reconcilable *to others*. Not only where we offer, but from whom we receive an injury. God's reconciliation should be our rule in dealing with others. Hard hearts and uncharitable dispositions are unlike to God, who had a heart full of tenderness to them, who will not part with a grain of their right to their brethren, when God parted with his Son to work their peace with him; and had he not been more forward in it than they, they had perished for ever. God sets his own actions to us as a pattern of ours to others; *Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful, Luke 6. 36*; if we are irreconcilable to others, we are not imitators of God, but reject the noblest pattern, and discover no sense of the kindness of God to us. Since God hath made Christ a propitiation for sin, the apostle makes this inference, that if God *so loved us, we ought also to love one another, 1 John 4. 10, 11.*

Did God send his Son out of his bosom, and veil his glory to be at peace with us, and intreat us to accept his favour; and shall we be upon every occasion at sword's point with our brother? Such a disposition is against the whole tenor of the gospel, and a keeping up a wolfish and brutish nature against the design of the gospel administration, *Isa. 11. 6*. Christ came to slay the enmity between God and us, between Jew and Gentile; it is a crossing the design of God, to preserve enmity between christian and christian; it is to keep up the partition wall, and frustrate, what in us lies, the end of Christ's death, which was to demolish it. The peace God wrought was a matter of grace, the peace we owe to our brother is a matter of debt; it is due to the command of

God ; God first laid the scene of our reconciliation, not assisted by the counsels of others ; not sought to by ourselves, but seeking us. Our doing the like to others is an imitation of God ; whereas to be implacable in revenge, is to partake of the devil's nature.

9. *Glorify* God for this. Since God sends out such a blessing to us, we should send out loud prayers to him. * Heaven smiles upon earth, and earth should bless heaven. Glorify God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ; though we have all immediately from Christ, yet Christ hath all from the Father. He is the propitiation for our sins, but he was appointed by the Father. He came to redeem, but he was sent by God upon that errand. He paid our debts as a surety, but he was accepted by God. He was a Mediator to bring us to God, but he was commissioned by God to that end. What a love did God retain to his creatures, though he abominated their sins, and in the midst of his indignation against their iniquities, had compassion for their persons ! How did God forecast for us, when we were *prisoners in the pit wherein was no water, Zech. 9. 11, the captives of the mighty, and the prey of the terrible? Isa. 49. 25.* When the law of God was against us, and his truth taking part with his law ; his wisdom and mercy found a way to preserve his truth, and satisfy the curses of the law, that we might enjoy the blessings of the gospel, when we could not in the least deserve it, unless peevishness and perversity, treachery and disloyalty, weakness and wilfulness, could pass for allurements ; we had then been inconceivable meriters. Such free and full compassion deserves our thankfulness, though we could not merit his grace.

It is not a *contracted*, half-made, or *oppressive* peace, it is an extensive, tender, and abundant *peace, like a river and a flowing stream*, a peace whereby we

are borne in his bosom, *Isa. 66. 12.* How should we adore the depth of that wisdom which found a refuge for us, when heaven and earth were at war with us ! Adore his goodness, that when we were no sooner born, but we were the objects of a cursing law, the scorn of a malicious devil, our Jesus should be sent to pacify the law, and shame the devil our enemy. Angels glorify him for this peace ; should we be outstripped by being less concerned in it ? God is only praised in and through Christ ; God and Christ are joined together in the saints' praise ; *Blessing, and honour, glory, and power, be unto him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever, Rev. 5. 13 ;* and so they should in ours. How beautiful will this whole work appear, when the whole methods of it come to be read in heaven in the original copy ? When they shall be seen in the face, in the bosom of God, in fair and plainer characters ?

To conclude. If all the sparks that ever flew out of any fire since the creation, and all the drops of rain that have fell upon the world, were so many angelical tongues, their praise would come short of the excess of this love. Let the praise of God for this, be not the business of a day, but the work of our lives, since eternity is too short to admire it.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

John 17. 3.

AND THIS IS LIFE ETERNAL, THAT THEY MIGHT KNOW
THEE THE ONLY TRUE GOD, AND JESUS CHRIST
WHOM THOU HAST SENT.

PART I.

EXPLICATION OF THE TEXT AND GENERAL
OBSERVATIONS.

*The care of Jesus for his people before his departure—
Confidence in the paternal character of God—The
sufferings of Christ decreed—A voluntary Redeemer
—We must ask what is promised—The glory of
God made the chief end in prayer—Glory of the
Father and Son united—The manner of prayer—
The glory of the church secured—The glory and
love of Christ—His kingdom and authority—Go-
vern the world for his church—The way to eternal
life—One mercy a plea for another—The knowledge
of God—What it includes—The Deity of Christ.*

THIS chapter contains the last prayer of Jesus with his disciples, after his farewell sermon, which began after Judas's departure, *John 13. 31*, and ends at the end of the sixteenth chapter. The design

of his sermon, and that of his prayer, was one and the same; his discourse to them was, that they *might have peace in him*, *John* 16. 33. * That they might acquiesce in him for peace with God, that peace of conscience was only to be possessed by the knowledge and love of Christ. His prayer for them in their hearing was, that they might have a firm and *full joy*, ver. 13, that they might have an antidote against all their fears and troubles they should meet with in the world, and a strong foundation for their own supplications to God. Zauchy calls it, "the foundation of the church from the beginning of the world to the end of it;" it always had, and always will have, its efficacy for every believer. It is a copy left upon the earth, of what he intercedes for as an advocate in heaven. By an inspection into it, we may know what Christ is doing above; for it was that his people might have a full joy, a strong cordial in all afflictions, desertions, temptations.

Some think it to be the same with that prayer in the garden. † But that opinion hath no firm foundation.

1. The matter of the prayer is different: in *this*, our Saviour prays for his own glorification, for assistance in his approaching passion, and an unloosing afterwards the bands of death by an happy resurrection. In *that*, he prays for a removal of the cup which was prepared for him.

2. The gesture is different; in this he lifts up his eyes to heaven, in token of a confidence in his Father, for the answer of his prayer, with such confidence as he hath in heaven in his intercession. In the garden he fell prostrate upon the earth; *He fell on his face and prayed*, *Matt.* 26. 39. His eyes were towards the earth.

3. His company were not the same; in this his disciples were with him, in that he withdrew from his disciples, taking only three with him, *Matt.* 26. 37,

* Feras.

† Gerhard, Harm. cap. 182.

and presently went aside from them also by himself, ver. 39. This prayer they all heard, the other they did not, for sleep had possessed them.

4. In this he prays as Mediator, and pleads the terms of the mediatory covenant, which had been agreed upon before his coming into the world. In that he prays more like a man from the strugglings of the flesh, as though there had been a contest between human nature and his mediatory office ; in the one he declares his Deity, in the other evidences his humanity in the infirmities of the flesh ; in this his soul was free from disturbance, in that his *soul was sorrowful and very heavy, even unto death, Matt. 26. 37, 38.* He prayed then as one standing charged with all our sins which made him bow his head to the ground, he prayeth here as one that hath satisfied for our sins, triumphed over his enemies and performed his Father's will : *I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do, John 17. 4.* In fine, this prayer in regard of the matter, he still pursues in heaven, the other petition he never afterwards, nor ever shall re-assume into his lips.

If any part of scripture be to be magnified above another, this seems to claim the pre-eminence, it being the breathing out of Christ's heart before his departure, for the comfort of his disciples, and the succeeding church, to the end of the world ; a standing monument of his whole mediatory design and his unalterable love.

Verse 1, *These words spake Jesus, and lift up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son may also glorify thee.* * Christ first

acted with man in the name of God by teaching, he now acts with God in the name of man by praying. *† It is a miraculous prayer in the person of Christ, who is essentially one with the Father to whom he prays ; personally one with the Son of man, who prays here to the Father.

* Ilyric. in loc.

† Gerhard, Harmon. c. 180.

Father. Not our Father, as he had taught us to pray, but Father, to shew that the paternity of the Father to him was in another manner than that to his people, he was the natural Son of God, believers adopted ones.

Thy Son. In a way of eminency and peculiarity above others; thy Son, by eternal generation; thy Son in his humanity, by the grace of personal union.

The hour is come. The hour of my passion, the hour of thy satisfaction, the hour of thy expectation, the hour of my victory and thy glory. I am coming to the last point of my humiliation, I have managed an obedience to thee hitherto, with all care and diligence, I am now come to perfect it by my death, I will not decline the last act of it, decline not thou, O Father, the glorifying of me, while I stand as the butt of all thy wrath for the sins of men.

Glorify thy Son. Glorify him in his death, by accepting it as the death of thy Son for the sins of the world. glorify him in his death, by manifesting at that time that I am thy Son. God did so by miraculous testimonies of his innocency in the time of his passion, by rending of the temple's veil, obscurity of the sun, quaking of the earth, and the cleaving of the rocks, which made the centurion that guarded him pronounce him to be truly *the Son of God*, *Matt.* 27. 54.

Glorify him in a resurrection, glorify thy Son in his Deity by a manifestation of it; glorify thy Son in his humanity, by conferring new endowments of honour and immortality upon it. He prays here for a manifestation of the glory of his Deity which had been obscured, for an addition of glory to his humanity which had not been yet enjoyed, by a resurrection and exaltation of it to the right hand of the Father. He prays for a manifestation of his Deity. Glorify thy Son; he was the Son of God by eternal generation, it is the glory of his Deity therefore which is here desired by him. Not the essential glory of the Deity, for that could not be interrupted.

Not any addition to it, for being infinite, he was not capable of it. But a manifestation of it; not simply in itself, but in his humanity, which had been veiled by the flesh ever since he emptied himself into it. He prays to be glorified in that state wherein he prays, which was a state of union with the human nature. His essential glory could suffer no detriment, his manifestative did; as the sins of men are said to dishonour God, not that they detract from the glory of his essence, which cannot suffer any diminution by the sins of men, but as they deny or obscure the manifestation of his glory: the sun suffers no loss of light in his body by the veil of a thick cloud, but the brightness of his beams is masked. As the Father was to be glorified by Christ, so was Christ to be glorified by the Father; now the Father could not be glorified by the Son in a way of addition, but manifestation, causing the glory of God to break out upon the world, which had so long been obscured by an universal idolatry; he glorified the Father by a manifestation of his name, ver. 4, and in like manner is glorified by the Father in the manifestation of his Deity.

* That Christ prays here for the glory of his Deity, as well as of his humanity, is evident. Because he prays as Mediator and Priest, desiring a mediatory glory; but he was Mediator and Priest according to his divine as well as human nature, and therefore desires, that he might be known to the world, not only to be a just and innocent man, but the eternal Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, the expiator of sins, and in that work infinitely delightful to the Father. *Glorify thy Son*: glorify him as thy Son, that as thy Son he may glorify thee. The Son of God was in the world as a great light in a dark lanthorn, clouded and covered with clay, that though the candle burned, it did not appear but through some small aperture; he desires that this thick mist might be

* Zanch. de tribus Elohim, part 1. l. 4. c. 10.

dispersed, that the glory of his divinity might shine forth in his humanity, as a candle through polished glass. The glory of Christ was to be manifested to be the Son of God ; *We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, John 1. 14.* A glory in his resurrection, his ascension, in the mission of the Spirit, which declared him to be no other than the only Son of God : and so ver. 22, of this chapter is to be understood, *The glory which thou gavest me, I have given them ;* as it is my glory to be the Son of God, so I have given them this glory to be the sons of God by adoption, *that they may be one as we are one,* in the same relation of sonship, though in a different manner.

His petition for this glory he urges by two arguments. One in ver. 1, *That thy Son also may glorify thee.* The glory of the Father was concerned in it, whose justice, wisdom, love, and all the attributes so signally manifested in redemption, had lain under as great a disguise without the glory of Christ, as the Deity of the Son did under the veil of his flesh.* Another argument is taken from the happiness and salvation of the elect ; *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him,* ver. 2. Unless the humanity had been glorified by a resurrection, there would have been no assurance that the debt had been satisfied, and no sure ground of faith : unless he had been exalted to the right hand of God as an advocate, there had been no security for our debts. His resurrection was necessary to make men believers for what was past, his exaltation was necessary to make them comfortable believers for the time to come : and unless his divine nature had been manifested in the mission of the Spirit, and the collation of miraculous gifts, there had been no foundation for the propagation of the doctrine of redemption, and so that glorious work had lain wrapped up from human view. The other was necessary as a ground of faith,

* Zanch. ut supra.

and this was necessary to the declaration of the doctrine of faith, and an incentive to the embracing of it. Since he was shortly to die, and be executed under the notion of a criminal, a blasphemer, and a wicked man; if he were not raised again, no one would believe in him as Mediator, and so the glory of the Father, and the salvation of the elect, had sunk with the glory of the Son.

Observe, 1. The *inexpressible care of Christ* for the comfort of his people before he went out of the world. He had preached to them, he would pray for them in their hearing, that their joy might be full. He could not manifest his care in an higher manner than by using his power with his Father for their good; here he gives an assurance of the efficacy of his mediation, the certain terms wherein he stood with the Father. They might before have questioned the truth of those things, which he had said unto them; but there was no room for any doubt, when they find him, a little before his death, asserting the same things to his Father, begging the accomplishment of them; howsoever some of them might suspect the declarations of a man, they would not suspect his appeals to God.

2. The consideration of God's being *a Father*, is the highest ground of confidence in prayer, and a strong argument to excite the kindness of God towards us. *Father, glorify thy Son.* It is a glory Christ hath purchased for, and given to every believer, to call God Father; *My Father and your Father*, John 20. 17; before his passion it was, I go to the Father, now *your Father* as well as mine. Not *our* Father, but *my* Father and *your* Father, mine by nature, yours by grace; yet as really yours by grace, as mine by nature. Our addresses are to be to God as a Father, since the relation is real; really purchased, really confirmed. Members should imitate the head: use their privileges, since the Redeemer hath taken our infirmities that we might partake of

his dignity. With what confidence may a child ask, with what affection will a Father give? Christ had the sense of his sonship when he prayed, and we should have the sense of our adoption.

3. The passion of Christ was the *determination of God*. *The hour is come*, the time decreed to a moment, the hour, and the work of the hour, agreed on and determined between the Father and the Son in an eternal counsel; all the consultations of the Jews against him were successless, till this hour. Times and events are in the hands of God.

4. Christ was a *voluntary* Redeemer. *The hour is come*. I am ready to perform what thou hast enjoined and I have promised; he sought no shelter from suffering; he expressed here no sorrow for it; no grief at it; he looks beyond the hour of suffering to the hour of glory. We should be voluntary subjects, and look through the cloud of suffering to the glory of the crown.

5. The *full assurance* of obtaining what we want, must not *chill our supplications for it*. Who can have greater assurance of supply, than our Redeemer had of assistance in his task, and exaltation after it? ensured by the promises to him, supported by the oath of God that he should be a priest for ever, of which he had at this time, a sense and impression upon his heart, *John 13. 1, 3*. He knew that he should *depart out of this world unto the Father*, and knowing that *the Father had given all things into his hands, that he was come from God, and went to God*, yet he prayed for that glory. Promises are not damps, but incentives and guides to prayer, they are to inflame us, not to cool us. How can we pray in faith, without a promise which is the ground of faith, since prayer is nothing but a putting promises in suit? Precepts command us to pray, and promises direct us what to pray for, with hopes of success. The promises of a seed to Christ stand firm, yet he is now in heaven an advocate interceding for it. As Christ,

though assured, hath nothing without asking, so neither can his members. Promises encourage to put in our claim to them, and not our waving it. When Daniel knew that the term of the church's captivity was near expired according to the promise of God, he became more earnest in prayer, *Daniel* 9. 2, 3.

6. The glory of God must be *principally* in our minds, and nearest our hearts, in all our supplications. Christ prays first for his own glory, but as a means for the glory of his Father, before he prays particularly for the good of the church. *Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee*; and only for such a glory for himself, whence the glory of the Father might spring with a greater brightness upon the Son; for by the raising Christ, and manifesting the glory of his Deity, the Father would be glorified in full declarations of himself, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the author of the great redemption, as a God that so loved the world as to send his Son into it for the redemption of it. *Hallowed be thy name*, is the first petition in the Lord's prayer. The glory of God must weigh more in our thoughts than our private interest: his glory is to be our end in our common actions, *1 Cor.* 10. 31, much more in acts of religious worship. If another end be higher in our hearts, in our prayers, though we pray to God, we really worship an idol, viz. self; though God be the object, yet he is not the end. We must seek to God for all blessings with the same end for which God gives them, he gives us the highest for his glory; *He hath accepted us in his beloved to the praise of the glory of his grace*. We must beg for self subordinately, but for God's glory ultimately: our Saviour begged glory for himself, that he might return glory to his Father. To beg any thing for ourselves principally, is the prayer of some lust, ambition, or covetousness; to beg any thing for God's glory, is a prayer of grace like that of our Saviour's.

7. The glory of the Father and the Son are united together. The Father cannot be glorified without the

Son, nor the Son without the Father. They are in conjunction in all the actions of redemption, and therefore in the glory redounding from it. The Father glorified the Son when he declared him to be Saviour of the world; and by this declaration was the Father discovered to be full of love to the world. The sun in the heavens is not glorified but in his beams, and the beam is not glorified but by the communication of light from the sun; what glory the sun hath is discovered in the beam, what glory the beam hath, redounds to the sun. The Father was glorified in all his acts which concerned the glory of Christ: his wisdom in finding out so full and efficacious a remedy, his justice in his death; his power in the sustaining him in his sufferings, and his resurrection from the grave, his veracity in every circumstance which has been foretold, his love and kindness in the mission of the Spirit, to spread his wings over the world, who was before confined to the Jews. As the glory of both is united in itself, it must be united in our services, we must honour both, one as the *object* of worship, the other as the *medium*: The Father as the rector, Christ as the ambassador; as the Father is not glorified by Christ, but by first glorifying Christ, so neither is the Father glorified by us without our glorifying Christ first by believing. When we glorify Christ as the Son of God, we glorify God as the Father of Christ; we cannot glorify the paternity without acknowledging a filiation, nor acknowledge a filiation without honouring the paternity.

8. Christ's prayer being argumentative, teaches us the manner of our praying, which should consist of arguments for God's glory and our happiness; not that arguments move God to do that which he is not willing of himself to do for us, (as Christ's pressing arguments to his Father, was not to inform God of the necessity of what he prayed for) as though the infinitely wise God needed information, or the infinitely loving God needed persuasion; but

it is for strengthening our faith in him. All the prayers in the scripture you will find to be reasoning with God, not a multitude of words heaped together; and the design of the promises is to furnish us with a strength of reason in this case; *Now according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thy anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, Dan. 9. 16.* He pleads God's righteousness in his promise of the set time of deliverance; after he had settled his heart in a full belief of the promise of deliverance, he shows God's own word to him. The arguments you will find drawn from the covenant in general, or some promise in particular, or some attribute of God, or the glory of God. All this prayer of Christ is full of arguments drawn from several heads, the first petition is enforced by one. *As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life, to as many as thou hast given him, ver. 2.*

Which is another reason he urges for his sustentation in his passion, and his resurrection, and exaltation; and the sense runs thus, "It is necessary I should be glorified, since thou hast given me a power to give eternal life to as many as thou hast given me, which was not given me as an empty title and useless power; give me therefore such a glory which may make that power I am endowed with, significant for those ends for which it is conferred; the giving eternal life was the great end of my coming into the world, which life cannot be had without the knowledge of thee the true God, and of Jesus Christ as Mediator; the glory of my humanity, and the manifestation of my Deity are necessary to the exercise of this power, and the attainment of the end thereof, that those which thou hast given me may know who I am, that I am a priest and a Mediator of thy appointment, thy Son in whose hands their happiness is secure, that so they may trust me and believe in me, and herein, O Father, thou wilt be glorified, for by this

they will understand how wise, holy, true, good, merciful, loving thou art to the sons of men."

Observe, 1. the glory of Christ, and the glory of the Father in and by Christ, is 'the *security* of the glory of the church and every believer. The glory of the Father is the first link in the chain, upon which all the other benefits Christ desires for the church do depend. The first reason he presses for his own glory, is the glory of the Father, the next is the salvation of his elect; as they are joined in Christ's prayer, they are also united together in themselves: it is the glory of God that the whole lower creation made to set forth his praise, should not be the triumph of the devil, that he should not boast that he had frustrated God's design. Is it not the glory of God that his eternal counsel should have its full accomplishment, that the beauty of his believing creatures should be restored, the honour of God established, and the enemies of God put to confusion? This hath the same foundation as the glory of the Father hath, viz. the glory of Christ; since this is established, the other will be completed, and the eternal glory of believers stand as firm as the glory of the Father. The perseverance of a believer is secured, for if it be the honour of God to deliver souls out of the devil's hand, it is for his honour to keep them, that they may not be regained by the enemy from whom they have been delivered.

2. The glory of Christ was *necessary* for the salvation of believers; it is upon this account Christ pleads for it. Had he not been raised, sin had not been expiated; had he not ascended, heaven had not been opened; had he not been set at the right hand of God the atonement of sin had not been secured: had not the Spirit been sent into the world for the glory of Christ, the knowledge of this expiation had not been propagated.

3. The infinite *love* of Christ shines forth in this. A power was given him: he desired no glory of his Father but what was necessary for the good of his

people, and what he would lay out wholly for their interest. Christ esteems not any glory but as it is of use to his elect, and his chiefest glory consists not in possessing a power, but in exercising it for their benefit. Take notice of the love of the Father too, this power was given by him to this end, that he should give eternal life to those that were his Father's donatives. Upon this the salvation of the elect stands firm : the end of God's giving authority to Christ, and the end of Christ desiring a glory for the exercise of that authority, is one and the same ; Christ will not be unfaithful to his Father to neglect the end of the power he is intrusted with, nor will he cross the end of his own petition. What stronger argument can a believing soul urge in prayer, and embrace as a ground of faith ? The Father's gift, and the Son's request centering in one end, which will be denied by neither, affords a strong consolation. As the end of the righteousness Adam had, was to convey it to his posterity, so the end of the power Christ hath, is to convey righteousness, and secure happiness to his spiritual seed : who hath the immutable strength of the Deity surmounting the weakness and mutability of Adam's humanity, and will be as faithful to his trust as Adam was false to his.

4. How *large and extensive* is the kingdom and authority of Christ ? It is not limited to narrow confines : it extends over every creature, *over all flesh*, not one exempted, he hath a throne above the greatest monarchs, he is *King of kings and Lord of lords*. They cannot escape his iron rod, who refuse to subject themselves to his gracious sceptre. All that are fallen under the power of the devil by sin, are now under the dominion of Christ in grace or justice : all nations are subject to him as his inheritance and possession, *Psal. 2. 8.*

5. The kingdom of Christ is by a *divine authority*. *Thou hast given him power ; Ask of me and I will give thee, Psal. 2. 8.* It is not usurped, but by an

eternal grant and perpetual. Whatsoever he doth in his kingdom in order to the eternal life of believers, is ratified by God the Father, the donor of this power to him.

6. The whole scene of *the government of the world* is for the promoting the eternal life of the elect. All the world is in the hands of Christ. He hath power over all flesh, for this end, to give eternal life to those that God hath given to him. Every act of his government tends to this end; what is the end of his power, is the true end of the exercise of that power, in every act of it in the world. It must needs be so by consequence; and how sweet will it be at last to see the whole combination, how unanimously every providence conspired to this end, which our ignorant souls cannot now discern?

7. We see what is *the right way* to gain eternal life. The power of bestowing it is invested in Christ; we must have recourse to him, not only as the purchaser, but as the donor, by authority from the Father. We must believe in him as the purchaser upon the cross, call upon him as the distributor upon his throne. He had power given to merit it as he was one sent, he had power given him to confer it as he was one exalted.

8. *One mercy* sometimes is a strong plea for the *obtaining of another*. The gift of a power over all flesh is an argument used by Christ for a further glory. The power would be a fruitless gift, God would lose the honour of it, the praise of it, the improvement of it, if Christ were not put into a full capacity for the exercise of it. How often may we find logic enough in one mercy to argue for more with that God who is not willing the honour of his mercy should be lost, when the desires of his creatures are to glory him? To what purpose should God justify and sanctify, if he did not intend to glorify? He would else lose the glory of his former mercy, and his people would lose the comfort of it. If God lays the foundation, it is a strong plea for his raising the building to its full height.

We come now to the text; *This is eternal life*, &c. This is a transition from his prayer, declaring what eternal life was. Some understand it of the intuitive knowledge of God in heaven. But it rather seems to be meant of the knowledge of God here in this state of pilgrimage.

* 1. The reason of the petition evinces it. "Since thou, O Father, hast designed me to give eternal life, I can never accomplish this unless thou dost glorify me, because eternal life can only be conferred on those who acknowledge thee, and the Mediator thou hast sent. If I be not raised, none can be rationally induced to believe me to be Mediator; and if I do not ascend to heaven, the Spirit cannot come into the world, and consequently all means of manifesting thee in the Mediator will be wanting, and the eternal life I was designed to give, be kept from those thou hast designed for it."

2. He declares that those apostles who were then with him, had known that he came out from God, and had believed that God had sent him, ver. 8, and so had the root of eternal life in them: who yet were without an intuitive knowledge of God, of a blessed vision, which belongs only to a state of glory; it must therefore be meant of a knowledge of God by faith in this world. But it is the effect for the cause; the knowledge of God is not formally eternal life, but the cause of it, and the antecedent means to it. It is not eternal life in the formality and nature of it, but in the infallibility of causation; because if men had the true knowledge of Christ impressed upon them, it could not be but they must believe in him, and consequently have both a right to eternal life, and the foretaste of it. It is frequent in the scripture to put the effect for the cause, as *This is the condemnation that light is come into the world*, John 3. 19, i. e. this is the cause of condemnation.

This knowledge of God is not only a knowledge of

God, and Christ in the theory; but such a knowledge which is saving, joined with ardent love to him, cordial trust in him; as *then I shall know even as also I am known*, 1 Cor. 13. 12, i. e. I shall love and rejoice, as I am beloved and delighted in by God. It is not only a knowledge of God in his will, but a knowledge of God in his nature, both must go together; we must know him in his nature, we must be obedient to his will. The devil hath a greater knowledge of God's being than any man upon earth, but since he is a rebel to his will, he is not happy by his knowledge. It must be such a knowledge as leads to eternal life, and hath a necessary and infallible connexion with it, as the effect with the cause, which is not between a speculative knowledge and salvation. It must be therefore such a knowledge which descends from the head to the heart, which is light in the mind, and heat in the affections, such a knowledge of God as includes faith in him.

Two things constitute this knowledge. 1. We must know God, the true God, *as the gospel discovers him*, in opposition to *all false gods*; that he is spiritual, just, powerful, merciful, faithful. 2. We must know God as *the Father of Christ*; we must know him in that relation to Christ, without which knowledge we can have no right conceptions of the economy of redemption, because all proceeds from the Father through the Son.

That which is the greatest stumbling-block in the text, is that clause, *Thee the only true God*, whereby some would exclude the Deity of Christ. Christ prays to the Father, and acknowledges him the only true God; if the Father therefore, say some, be the *only true God*, then Christ is not God, and they tell us that Christ is *Deus factus, Deus constitutus*. But to say a *made* God, is as great nonsense, as to say, an uncreated creature. Both carry a contradiction in the terms. The scripture frequently and plainly asserts the Deity of Christ: no creature can be equal with God: but Christ was *in the form of God*, and

thought it no robbery to be equal with God, *Phil. 2. 6.* He was equal to God in his Deity, though inferior to God in his humanity; the form of God stooped to the form of a servant, but the form of a servant despoiled him of nothing essential to the form of God; he ceased not to be what he was before, when he became in the womb of the Virgin, what he was not before. *All things that the Father hath are mine*, saith Christ, *John 16. 15*, what is more the Father's than his essence and deity? The essence therefore and deity of the Father, is the essence and deity of the Son.

Austin argues well upon, *All things were made by him, by the word, John 1. 3*; therefore himself was not made, for nothing can make itself; and it is added, *without him nothing was made*. Therefore the λόγος is not *ex rebus factis*. He is therefore God, for there is no medium; and he is called God blessed for ever; *Of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all God blessed for ever, Rom. 9. 5.* Where the Greek article ὁ is added, which the adversaries of this truth deny to be added to θεός when it is attributed to Christ. And John, as if he had foreseen what work would be made of this solum against the Deity of Christ, gives us an antidote against it; *We are in him that is true, in his Son Jesus Christ: this is the true God and eternal life, 1 John 5. 20*; where the article also is added.

The answer to this is various. * Some understand the word, μόνον, *one*, not alone, or only, and so translate it, that they may know thee the *one* true God; and the word is often of that signification. Others say, Christ here acknowledgeth the Father the only true God, because the Father is the fountain of the Deity. In regard of the essence there is no prerogative, but only in respect of the persons, which consists only in order and personality, as the Father is said to beget, and the Son said to be begotten. That may

* Zanch. de trib Eloh. part 1. lib. 4. cap. 10.

be affirmed in one respect, which cannot in another ; as *Mark* 13. 32, the Son is said not to know the day of judgment, but the Father ; not the Son of man, but the Son absolutely ; he knew it not as man, but he knew it as God.

Others say, to omit many other answers, that this particle *only* is put to exclude false Gods, which is most satisfactory. It excludes none that are of the same essence, but all that are not ; the Son is not excluded from being God ; *So the Lord alone did lead them, Jehovah, Deut.* 32. 12 : the Son is not excluded by that name Jehovah, for Christ led them, and in their murmuring they are said to *tempt* Christ, *1 Cor.* 10. 9. It was Christ who is called the angel of the Lord, that conducted them, *Exod.* 23. 20. *Exod.* 32. 34. *Isa.* 63. 9. * The word only does not exclude the Son ; for then when it is joined with the Son, it should exclude the Father from being God. But it is joined with the Son ; *Look unto me, and be ye saved all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else ; I have sworn by myself, that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear. Isa.* 45. 22. That this is understood of Christ by the best interpreter is evident, *Rom.* 14. 10, 11, where speaking of the standing of all before the judgment seat of Christ, he proves it by this place ; for as it is written, *As I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.* In Isaiah, it is spoken in opposition to idols, as appears by the twentieth verse ; and according to the apostle's understanding, it was Christ that spake there, asserting three times there was no God besides him, ver. 21, 22. Shall the Father therefore be excluded from the Deity, because Christ says so positively there is no God besides him ? There is no place, to which that in the Romans can refer, but to that in Isaiah.

Again, worship is due *only* to God, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve,*

* Gerhard Harm. cap. 180.

Mat. 4. 10. Does this exclude Christ from being worshipped, to whom it is due from the angels as well as from men? And further, this word *only* in other cases does not exclude, but include those that have the same respect with the person spoken of, as God swears, *Deut.* 1. 35, 36, that not one of that generation should see the good land save Caleb; yet Joshua is not excluded, who manifested the same integrity in the report of Canaan, after they had been to view it. And when Paul says, he determined to *know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified*, *1 Cor.* 2. 2, does he exclude the knowledge of God the Father, and the knowledge of Christ glorified, as well as crucified? No surely.

Finally, what is attributed to the Son, the Spirit is not excluded from, therefore what is attributed to the Father, neither the Son nor the Spirit are excluded from. As when it is said, *None knows the Father but the Son*, *Mat.* 11. 27, is the Spirit excluded, who searches the deep things of God, and *knows the things of God*? *1 Cor.* 2. 11. And indeed in common expression, the word *only* is not exclusive of any that are in conjunction with a person we speak of; as when we speak of a tradesman, that usually hath the choicest commodities of this or that sort, we say, he is the only man in London for such wares, we exclude not those that are partners with him in his trade; but all that are not in conjunction with him in it.

* The scope of the place evidences that the Father is called the true God in opposition to *idols*; for when Christ saith all power was given to him, that he might give eternal life, to as many as were given to him; those that were given to him were among the Gentiles as well as the Jews, he here respects them both; the Gentiles worshipped many gods, the Jews worshipped one God, but rejected Christ as Mediator. Now the knowledge of both is necessary to salvation. In the

first clause he respects the multiplicity of heathen gods, in the other the Jewish contempt of the Mediator; so then the expression excludes only the heathen idols. *How you turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, 1 Thes. 1. 9.* God is called the true God in opposition to idols.

The Deity of Christ is asserted in every verse almost, before and after, and therefore is not excluded in this. He hath *power over flesh, to give eternal life* to them; too great a power to be entrusted in the hands of a mere creature, and too great a gift to spring from a mere creature; the one is an infinite power, and cannot be managed by a finite head and hand, it requires omniscience to the due exercise of it; the other is an infinite happiness, and cannot be bestowed and secured by a finite strength. This eternal life is the knowledge of God; there must be a work upon the understanding and upon the will to produce this saving knowledge; these two faculties in spiritual things, lie open only to the touch of an infinite power. The power over all creatures extends to their inward motions, thoughts, turnings of their heart for the good of the elect, which is only the prerogative of God, not of a creature. He had a *glory with the Father before the world was*, ver. 5, not in his humanity before it was in being, therefore in the Deity; and the glory conferred upon his humanity, cannot be managed without a conjoined divinity.

Again: the knowledge of the Son is made a cause of eternal life, as well as the knowledge of the Father; it is not to be thought that the knowledge of any creature should be counted equally necessary to salvation, with the knowledge of God; if our happiness consist in the knowledge of both, then both the Father and the Son are of the same nature. The term Father manifests it, God was the Father of Christ from eternity; Christ was with him before any creature was in being. If the Father were the eternal Father, the Son must be an eternal Son.

I might offer another consideration of this place,

viz. that the *true God* may refer to the veracity of God the Father in his covenant with Christ, and his promises, to us (the Syriac seems to carry it this way, to know thee to be the only God of truth) a fiducial knowledge is here meant, a knowledge accompanied with faith and trust in God, the ground whereof is particularly the veracity and faithfulness of God in his promise ; and the truth of God in his promise to man, is founded upon the truth of God in performing his covenant with Christ, which Christ insists upon, ver. 4, 5, where he speaks of his own office performed by him in the manifestation of God's name, as a work God gave him to do, and claims a glory as due by a former transaction between them. Or thus, I cannot give eternal life, unless I be glorified ; by this thou wilt evidence thyself to be a true sincere God, not giving me an empty power ; and men's knowing and understanding this, and thereby knowing me to be thy Christ, sent by thee, will be their way to eternal life. Or it may be understood of the promises declared by the prophets of exalting him, after the performance of his work upon the earth ; and by the glorifying of him after he had made himself a sacrifice, God would declare himself a God of truth in the performance of the covenant made with him, and the promises published by the prophets, the knowledge whereof would be a motive to and ground of faith, and so the means of eternal life : so it is life eternal to know and believe in God as a God of truth in his promises, made to and concerning Christ ; not only in his mission, but in his exaltation. * The word ἀληθινός is many times taken so, as ἀληθινοὶ λόγος, Plutarch, and ἀληθινοὶ φίλοι *true friends* that do not deceive. The Father so may be said to be the only true God, as he was the person promising Christ to us, and covenanting with Christ about the work of redemption, and the person to

* Stephani Thesaurus.

whom the mission of Christ is ascribed. Christ was the person promised to us as a Redeemer, and the person covenanting with God the Father about redemption. Christ now being upon a plea for himself and his people, that he might be enabled to glorify God, urgeth the declaration of God's veracity, as the only means whereby eternal life might be conveyed to men. And since veracity is an essential attribute, neither the Son nor the Holy Ghost are excluded from being the true God, but the Father is considered here in a personal transaction as standing in the present economy. I will not urge it, because it is an untrodden path, but leave it to consideration, which perhaps it may somewhat deserve.

PART II.

IN WHAT THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD CONSISTS.

Division of the text and subject—Definition of knowledge—The kind of it—Speculative knowledge—Practical, enlivening—Conforms the soul to God—Experimental knowledge—How it differs from speculative knowledge—In the means—In clearness—In the effects—Knowledge of interest—The knowledge of God necessary—The subject of promise—No happiness without it—The happiness of God—The happiness of heaven—Satan endeavours to keep men in ignorance of God.

WE may see in the text,—First, *The cause or nature of happiness, knowledge*; by way of excellency and exclusion of every thing else, as the cause of happiness.—Secondly, *The object of this knowledge, God and Christ.*

1. *God*: to know him in his nature, perfections, effluxes in and through Christ, to know him as *one*. 2. *Christ*, to know him as commissioned and sent by God; in his *person*, and in his *offices*. 3. *Conjunctly*, God and Christ, God in Christ. It is *ἐν διὰ ἐνοίων*, as 2 *Pet.* 1, 2, through the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ, i. e. through the knowledge of God in Christ; and *Rom.* 1. 5, grace and apostleship, i. e. the grace of apostleship.

Observe,

1. Knowledge of God and Christ, is the *life and happiness of the soul*. What meat is to the body, that, and more, are divine truths to the soul. In the clear sight of God as the supreme good, the understanding is satisfied, the will filled with love, and all the desires of the soul find the centre of their rest. The vision of God in heaven, is the satisfaction of the soul, and the imperfect knowledge of him here, is our imperfect felicity. It is the root of eternal life, which will spring up in time to mature fruit, to the knowledge of him above, which is the complete happiness. “* True happiness ariseth from truth known, and goodness beloved.”

2. Eternal life and happiness consists not *in any worldly thing* ; not in riches or honours ; the soul is a more excellent part of a man than the body, the happiness of it must consist in something which is the proper object of it, and more excellent in the rank of beings, than the understanding is in the rank of faculties. The operations of that, conduce more to felicity than the actions of sense.

3. The knowledge of Christ is as *necessary* to happiness, as the knowledge of God. If a man had the knowledge of God in as clear a manner as the angels have, yet without a knowledge of Christ, he were as remote from happiness as a devil. Though the knowledge of Christ be not simply necessary to the angels who never fell, and so needed not a Mediator ; yet it is necessary to us, who are obnoxious to God's wrath, and so need a Reconciler, because of the enmity ; a Redeemer, because of our slavery ; a Refiner, because of our impurities ; a Mediator, because of our distance to bring us to God.

4. The true knowledge of Christ is not only a knowledge of his person, but a knowledge of his commission, as sent. It is a material question that the pharisees asked our Saviour, *By what authority doest*,

thou these things? though they asked it maliciously to get advantage against him by his answer. We could have no comfort, if we did not know and consider by what authority he acted in this great affair. Our security in Christ lies in his authority from God. Faith hath comfort in him as he is the Son of God, comfort in him as he is God's commissioner, but higher comfort as he is both joined together : as being the Son of God he hath ability, as being sent of God he hath authority ; he might have been the Son of God, without authority to such a work, had he not been commissioned ; he might have been sent of God, and commissioned by him, and not have done the work he was appointed, had he not been the Son of God, and so had an infiniteness of ability ; Christ sets out both these as the ground of faith to us ; *Glorify thy Son*, ver. 1, *whom thou has sent*, in the text.

The doctrines upon which I shall particularly insist, are, that the knowledge of God, and Christ the Mediator, is the necessary means to eternal life and happiness. And, that the true and saving knowledge of God is only in and by Christ.

For the first. The knowledge of God, and Christ the Mediator, is *the necessary means of eternal life and happiness*. It is the knowledge of God as discovered, not in the creatures but in the scripture ; a knowledge of God through faith in Christ, which is able to make us wise to salvation. The *tree of knowledge* in Paradise became our death, and the tree of knowledge in the gospel becomes our life. The knowledge of God and Christ, not only frees us from a dark and obscure walk, but is *the light of life*, John 8. 12. The true knowledge of God and Christ is an effectual and infallible means of salvation, because upon such knowledge faith depends ; *They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee*, Psal. 9. 10.

Though no man can come to Christ unless the Father draw him, yet God draws every man by the cords of a man, by such means as are proportioned and fitted to the principles of his nature ; now it is as

proper for a man to be led and drawn by the light of knowledge, as it is for a spark to fly upwards, or a stone to move downward. The drawing by the Father to Christ, is explained by God's teaching of men, and men's apprehension of that teaching; and between men's thus learning of that which God teaches, and their coming to Christ, there is an essential connexion; *Every man that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me, John 6. 45.*

This knowledge is *a certain, full, and persuasive assent* to the *unity* of God, his *nature*, his *word*, to the *mediation* of Christ, and God's *communications* through him grounded upon a *divine light*, as plain and evident to the mind as any *natural light* is.

But we must here consider, I. in general, what kind of knowledge this is. II. That this is necessary. III. In what respects it is necessary. IV. What are the properties of this knowledge, whereby it is distinguished from other knowledge which is not saving. V. The use.

I. What *kind* of knowledge in general this is.

1. There is a *speculative* knowledge. A study and knowledge of God upon the same account that men study and desire to know other things that are excellent and delightful; as both the contemplation of God in the creation, and the contemplation of God in redemption, afford notions very gustful to a delicate understanding. Thus a man speculatively knows God and Christ, when he is well skilled in the revelation of God, the history of Christ, the analogy between the types and predictions of Christ in the old testament, and the accomplishment of them in the new, in the person of Christ. A knowledge of God by creation, many of the wiser sort of heathens had, who have discoursed excellently of the nature of God, *Rom. 1. 21*, they are said to know God: a knowledge of God by revelation, the Jews had in the old testament, who yet rejected the Son of God: a knowledge of Christ many learned men, professing christianity have, who know Christ in the bark of the letter, not

in the sap of the Spirit, as the Jews knew him under the veil of types, but were ignorant of his person when he came among them. This is such a knowledge which men have of a beautiful picture, or a comely person, with whom they have no acquaintance ; or as an astronomer knows the stars without receiving any more special influence from them than other men, or the inanimate creatures.

(1.) This knowledge is *natural*. In regard of natural education whereby they suck in and vent those notions rooted in them ; in regard of natural principles in the soul which conclude something of God, though nothing of Christ. There are some fragments of the broken tables of the law in the hearts of men, whereby they know the being of a God, and something of his nature, helped by reason and discourse, removing imperfections from him, in their conceptions of him, and comparing him with things that are most excellent in their apprehensions ; but there is no natural knowledge of Christ ; for all the sparklings of creatures, and all the letters of the law, laid in them and put together, present not a syllable of a Mediator. But this natural, educative, and historical knowledge, is not that here meant. It is a spiritual knowledge our Saviour intended, for he intended that which hath a connection with eternal life, which must have a principle framed by an higher hand than that of nature. As things visible in themselves, cannot be seen without a visive faculty and eye, and that well tempered, and rightly disposed for the perception of the object ; so neither can God, who is wholly spiritual, be spiritually known by evangelical revelation, without the cure of the mind from those films which are upon it by corruption. A spiritual principle is as necessary to a saving knowledge of God, as a visive faculty is to the discerning of visible objects.

(2.) This is not *enough*. A man may know an artificer by the excellency of his workmanship, with-

out any affection to his person ; *They glorified him not as God, nor were thankful, Rom. 1. 21.* Not one of all those philosophers, as one observes *, though they discoursed of one God, had some right apprehensions of his nature, yet ever composed one hymn in the praise of him, though there be among their poets some hymns writ in the praise of their fabulous deities. They pleased themselves barely in those enquiries and reasonings, without descending to that piety which is the true end of knowledge. And though their understanding had some glimmerings of light, their wills sunk under their imperious unrighteousness. If a speculative knowledge were our felicity, the devil, who is in the deepest misery, would be seated in the highest happiness ; he knows God, because once he enjoyed him ; he knew Christ, because he most feared him ; he did profess his knowledge of him, when scarce any upon earth well understood what he was : *I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God, Luke 4. 34 ;* yet notwithstanding that knowledge, was desirous to continue in the exercise of his government, and the practice of his impieties ; Let us alone. His knowledge is not his eternal life, but his eternal death. Since therefore God is known in his perfections, more by the devils, his professed enemies, than by any one of the sons of men ; this knowledge of God, which is the way to eternal life, is such a discovery which never did, nor never can enter into the hearts of devils. Speculative knowledge of God, without any further relish, is like the knowledge of the nature of food in the brain of a starving philosopher. Speculations are often a torment without affections. No man could find repose in the knowledge of God in heaven without love in his will, as well as light in his mind ; light without heat preserves not a man from chilness and shaking.

(3.) Yet though this speculative knowledge be not

* Estius in loc. what they knew naturally, in those things they did corrupt themselves.

saving, it is *useful* in the world. It is a promise that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord ; *They shall not destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, Isa.*

11. 9. Not a saving knowledge, because it is of another kind than the knowledge in the mountain of the Lord, and subjectively in the earth, the carnal part of the world, as distinguished from the holy mountain. By such a knowledge in man, God secures his people from the evil of the world, and justifies his proceedings in the hearts and consciences of the world. It is also useful to the person that hath it ; for without this he could never have a saving knowledge ; it is the foundation of a spiritual ; though a speculative might be without a spiritual, yet a spiritual cannot be without a speculative ; a foundation may be without a superstructure, but a superstructure can never be without a foundation.

2. There is a *practical* knowledge of God and Christ, which is not only an acquaintance with God, but a laying up his words in our hearts, *Job* 22. 21, 22, which is not a floating knowledge in the head, but a knowledge sinking to the heart ; and efficacious to make an union with him ; *He hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true,* 1 *John* 5. 20, where union follows upon knowledge. The speculations of God may fill the head, and the heart be empty of a sense of him, and the life barren of an imitation of God. This does not deserve the name of a knowledge, but in the apostle's account is truly an ignorance ; *Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him,* 1 *John* 2. 3, 4. Such answer not the end of knowledge ; and it can no more rationally be called a knowledge of God, since it hath no more life and soul in it, than a dead carcase.

Such a knowledge that hath no life in it, cannot

be the means to eternal life: what hath not life, cannot convey life. The devil's knowledge, is a dead knowledge; but the knowledge of God in an angel, joined with an obedience to God in his practice, is his eternal life. The other is knowledge floating in the brain, buoyed up by some corrupt lust from sinking further. This is wisdom entering into the soul, *truth in the hidden parts*, *Psal. 51. 6*, not a flourish in the paper, but a letter; the knowledge of the object, and an embracing the end of that knowledge. For though it may be a clear knowledge in the head, yet it is really a deep ignorance; a fluttering bubble, because the notion of God is not sucked in for that end for which it is let out: it is made known, that it may be melted into an affectionate practice, and not lie like a hard lump in the head.

Every man ought to know God, in order to his embracing him; and without this affection and love, he knows nothing as he ought to know; *If any man think that he knows any thing, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know*, *1 Cor. 8. 2*. For a man may have knowledge enough to stuff his head, but if barred from his heart and affections, it stands but begging in the outward court for admittance. The thinking of God and Christ with the head, and embracing Christ with the heart, are two distinct things; as the seeing a country in a map, and by travelling over it with our feet, are different kinds of knowledge. The one is a knowledge of the truth, the other an *acknowledgement of it as it is after godliness*, *Tit. 1. 1*. When the notion of God is not only pictured in the head, but the image of God engraven upon the heart, when the stamp in the heart is like that in the word, as a counterpart of a writing: a heart to be his people, as God hath a heart to be our God; *I will give them an heart to know me: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, for they shall return unto me with their whole heart*, *Jer. 24. 7*. The evangelical

promise is not so much to give us an head, though that is included, as a heart to know God.

For,

(1.) This is an *enlivening* knowledge. A spiritual knowledge is always attended with a spiritual life ; a new man, and such a knowledge as is after the image of God, go together ; *Having put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him, Col. 3. 10.* As the natural image of God consisted in understanding and will, so the spiritual image of God by grace consists in a rectifying those faculties ; the understanding with a spiritual knowledge, and the will with a spiritual bias. The faculties we have from God as Creator by nature, the operation of those faculties about their proper spiritual objects, we have by grace. As the apostle distinguishes the *form of godliness from the power, 2 Tim. 3. 5,* so he does a *form of knowledge from the life of it, Rom. 2. 20,* which is a knowledge in the *letter*, not in the *spirit*, ver. 29, the one is a picture wherein every limb is painted, the other is quickened and animated with a divine life. Speculative knowledge is as the light of torches, guiding, not heating ; this as the sun, which both directs and warms ; a fire felt, as well as seen ; truth known, and truth used as a compass to sail by.

When the knowledge of the nature of God is impressed upon us for imitation, and is, as the conference of Christ with his disciples, inflaming the heart, *Luke 24. 32,* and driving away the cold affections towards God ; when righteousness is understood as well as judgment, and that as a path, and a good path to walk in ; when we are not only directed to the path, but are pleased with the goodness of it, and the approving wisdom enters into the heart, and the knowledge of it becomes *pleasant to the soul, Prov. 2. 9, 10.* * When there is not only a knowledge of

* By knowledge, the Jews for the most part, if not always, understand a practical knowledge ; and by wisdom, a theoretical. Jachiades in Dan. 1. 4.

God, but a liking to retain it; a sight of the sun, and a delight in his beams; a knowledge of the fire, and approach to its heat; a mighty pleasure in God and Christ, as a sweet ointment poured forth. When God is known and embraced as the chief good and ultimate end; Christ known and embraced as the way to be at peace with God, and an honourer of him; such a knowledge as is not only like animal spirits in the brain, but vital spirits in the heart enabling for action; not like a cloud hanging in the air, but distilling in fruitful showers, for the assistance of the earth.

(2.) A *likening* knowledge. When we know Christ crucified in the conquest of our sins by his death, Christ glorified in the elevation of our souls by his ascension. To know a living God with a dead heart, is at best but a carnal knowledge, a dead knowledge, unsuitable to a living object, which calls for lively actions. To know Christ crucified, and have no efficacy of his death, to know Christ risen, and lie closed up in the grave of sin, to know Christ is ascended, and have creeping affections upon the earth, this is a notion of Christ, not a knowledge of him. That is the teaching of God, when the *truth* is learned *as it is in Jesus*, Eph. 4. 21. Powerfully directive, conforming the soul, as it did the human nature of Christ, to the will and mind of God: when the understanding is not forced to comply with the corrupt appetite of the will, but the will conformed to the true notions of an enlightened understanding. Such a knowledge which delights the mind, quickens the prayers, seasons the converse, and fortifies against temptations. Such a knowledge as wraps up the soul in admiration, spirits the will to operation, allures it to a close union, with the truth discovered, till it be like a leaven working in the will, and shaping the whole man according to its own mould: the fixing our eye on God by a spiritual knowledge derives a tincture from him, dying our souls into his own likeness; if the life does not differ from that of an infidel,

the knowledge, though as high as an angel's is no more saving than that of a devil.

And if knowledge be not of this description,

[1.] It is *useless*. No knowledge in the world is commendable, but as it is digested into will and reduced into practice. Should the eye direct the hand and foot, and they never move, what advantage would the body have by the eye's direction? It is all one to be blind and not to have the end of the visive faculty answered by the motion of the members.

[2.] It is not *commensurate* to divine revelation. It is not a knowledge according to the word, if it be not like the word, the instrumental cause of it. If it be not sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, the rational part from compliance with the corrupt affections of the sensitive, and so a destroyer as well as *discerner of the sordid thoughts and intents of the heart*, Heb. 4. 12. No material thing is perfectly known, unless it leave an impression upon those senses which are requisite for the knowledge of it; neither is divine truth known, unless it leave a full and commanding impression upon the mind, the faculty of knowledge: and because divine things are revealed for their goodness as well as for their truth, and the truth revealed in order to the apprehension of their goodness, it is not knowledge suitable to the intent of divine revelation, if the goodness be not swallowed and digested as well as the truth chewed.

3. There is an *experimental* knowledge of God. Speculative knowledge is a sound of words and thoughts, experimental a sense of them; and God hath not left the soul without a spiritual relish, any more than he hath left the body without a tasting palate. * And therefore one calls it well *Gustus spiritualis judicii*, it is a witness of the truth *in us*, 1 John 5. 10. There is a knowledge of Christ after the flesh, an admiration and esteem of him, as some

excellent moralist that hath published eminent precepts for the regulation of human conversation; this is no more a saving knowledge of Christ than the knowledge of a philosopher's thesis, or Seneca's moral Aphorisms amount to : it is a putting Christ in the same balance with them. But a spiritual knowledge of Christ is not only a relish of those precepts, but a draught of Christ in the soul, a receiving the spiritual emanations of God and Christ upon the heart. It is to know God in the power of his grace, and Christ in the virtue of his life, *Phil.* 3. 10. God in the streams of his love, and Christ in the sweetness of his blood ; when we see him upon the cross, and taste him in the soul, which is not only a knowledge by the understanding, but a knowledge by a spiritual sense, *Phil.* 1. 9.

There is such a knowledge as this. The scripture expresses the knowledge of God by the acts of sense as well as by the acts of reason, for we have more experience of things by sense, than we have by discourse. After the discourse of any thing with all the reason in the world, there must be recourse to sense to make it plain and evident ; hence arises the advantage of similitudes drawn from sensible objects, which clear what mere reason is not able to do. We find the knowledge of God set out by the acts of sense ; as by *tasting* ; *If so be you have tasted that the Lord is gracious*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 3. Or *relishing*, *Matt.* 16. 23. By *smelling*, 2 *Cor.* 2. 14. *The savour of his knowledge.* By *feeling*, 1 *John* 1. 1. Often by *seeing*, which being the quickest and most piercing sense, represents things to the understanding more clearly than bare report. And this kind of knowledge is necessary to happiness, for without it we can have no clear nor worthy notions of God, but more likely disparaging ones ; as a man that never saw the stateliness of London, or any city like it, cannot mount higher in his conceptions of it, than that it may be a little better than the best market town which he hath seen in his country, but he is not like

to have conceits of it according to the greatness of the place, the magnificence of the buildings, the gallantry of the people: when once he comes to behold it, he will find his former conceptions of it to be vastly short of the beauty of the place: he would scarce be convinced of it without a sight. Indeed this knowledge of God is imperfect here because of our present state. But some experience there is here answering to the vision hereafter, as a map of that which the soul is travelling to a sight of. This kind of knowledge of God is banished from the unclean spirits, they have lost the savour of what they knew of God, and feel nothing but the power of his wrath.

This differs from a speculative knowledge,

[1.] In the *means* and *manner* of knowing; not in the object. The object is the same in both God and Christ, the difference lies in the manner of their apprehension: one is by a common created understanding, the other is by an understanding given for that peculiar end; *The Son of God hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, 1 John 5. 20*: one is a conception of God, the other a taste, one knows God as a man by a human strength, the other knows God as a christian by sense and a divine knowledge: one is by *feeling after God, Acts 17. 27*; the other is by God's breaking out in divine beams upon the soul, like *a day star arising in the heart, 2 Pet. 1. 19*. One is by the natural strength of the understanding, improved by hearing, meditation, discourse; the other is the effect of an infused faith and the Spirit's operation: one knows God in the scripture by reading, the other by relish, and finds something in his own heart agreeing with it; what he reads with his eye, is drawn by a divine pencil in the soul. There is a knowledge of a thing without us, and a knowledge of a thing within us: men know there is a happy heaven, and heathens entertained it as an universal notion; but a believer knows it in himself by some beamings upon his heart; *Knowing in yourselves that you have in heaven a better and an enduring*

substance, Heb. 10. 34, which do more powerfully break in upon him in the time of sufferings.

So there is a knowledge of God from reason, nature, report, and a knowledge of God in ourselves by the workings of his grace; a man may know this or that meat to be sweet by report, yet not have the knowledge of it by the taste; the one depends upon the strength of his head to conceive, the other upon the goodness of the palate to relish it. Though both have the same object, yet they are not the same knowledge; he that prays from right principles, and he that prays from wrong have the same object of prayer, both pray to God, but they differ in the manner of their praying, which makes one acceptable, the other not, and therefore the object does not make our prayer right: so neither does the object make our knowledge saving. Yet the first knowledge makes us in a capacity for this, but it is frequently without it; a man may know that which he does not spiritually desire, but he can never spiritually desire that which he does not know. As the manner of Adam's knowing sin before and after his fall was different, so is the manner of knowing God: Adam knew sin in the theory before he was guilty, (for knowing the law, he could not but know what was contrary to the law, and what acts would violate it) but when he turned offender, he knew the power of sin, felt the evil of that which he did before but understand. A natural man knows God as Adam did sin before his fall; he understands something of his nature; but a gracious man feels the influences of God, and finds himself under the power of divine grace.

[2.] In the *clearness* of knowing. This is such a knowledge that can better describe God, from his spiritual illapses into the soul, than the clearest reasons of men with all their speculative notions. A blind man may know something of the reason of colours, but he cannot know them so feelingly as he that hath eyes. A man may know wine by the sight and smell, but not so clearly as when he tastes the sweet-

ness, and feels the cordial warmth of it in his stomach. Speculative knowledge is such a knowledge as Peter and John had of Christ's resurrection upon the report of Mary Magdalene, *John* 20. 2, 3, &c. They saw the linen clothes and no body there, which increased their belief and knowledge; this was a dim-sighted knowledge to that which Christ gave them by his appearance, when they could see both his hands and his sides, this was an experimental knowledge; and when he pronounced peace to them, this was a knowledge of interest, an assurance given that they were interested in the happiness and fruits of his resurrection. There is an excellency in divine knowledge that cannot be discovered by the tongues of men or angels, an experience and spiritual sensation renders a man more intelligent than all discourses can. As the natural sense best judges of sensible objects, so does the spiritual sense of divine. He that hath tasted honey, hath a more lively knowledge of it than the most learned man that never tasted the sweetness, or felt the operations of it: nor can any conceive so clearly of the excellency of the sun, by the discourses of the richest fancies, as by seeing its glory, and feeling the warmth of its beams. A man's own sense will better inform him of the beauty of the heavens, than the elevated reasonings of philosophers. Divine truth acted upon the heart and felt in its influence, is more plainly known than by discourse and reason. I would rather have the feeling which a sincere soul hath of God, than all the descriptions of him by a notional apprehension. One is knowledge in the notion, the other in reality; the one is the effect of well educated nature and common grace, the other the fruit of a spiritual eye salve, *Rev.* 3. 18, and an inward breathing; the one is a shining upon the head, the other a *shining into the heart*, *2 Cor.* 4. 6.

[3.] In regard of the *effects*. This works the effects which the other is too weak to produce. A little experimental sense of the majesty of God

brought Job more upon his knees than all the pressing discourses of his friends, or his own knowledge before his affliction. *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see thee, wherefore I abhor myself*, Job 42. 5, 6; a glimpse of God will bring forth more saving fruits, than all the reports of him to the ear, or speculations in the mind. God and Christ felt, refresh the soul more than the lifeless notions of them. The inward virtue of bread tasted and digested, refreshes the body more than the colour and figure can delight the eye. The contemplation of meat may please a philosophical understanding, but the turning it into our nature, the having it in our body, strengthens and cherishes the whole man. There is a pleasure in the historical knowledge of God and Christ, a pleasure in the meditation of the nature of God, the ends of the coming, passion, and resurrection of Christ, the nature of his mediation. But what is this to the powerful operation, in our hearts, and the conveyance of his life into our souls? Just as meditation of health by a sick man, comes short of the pleasure of feeling health in his veins and every member of his body. The one is like the delight a man takes in seeing a city in a map, the other like the contentment he takes in seeing the strength of the place, the beauty of the buildings, the harmony of the government, and the observations he makes thereupon.

4. There is a knowledge of *interest*: or an interested knowledge of God and Christ. Experimental knowledge Peter and John had of Christ's resurrection when Christ appeared to them, interested knowledge when he pronounced peace to them. Though the knowledge of the excellency of God, and of Christ's going to heaven, is a ground of comfort, yet an interest in this is the formal part of our felicity. What satisfaction can we have, if we have no part in God, if Christ went not to heaven for us? The devil hath a knowledge of God in the theory, but a torment from that knowledge in the reflection. The

knowledge of God without hopes of an interest in him, is terrifying. While Adam retained his purity, the attributes of God were cordials to him, he could delight in his goodness, have access to his power, refresh himself by the faithfulness of God ; innocence and interest see nothing but what is highly ravishing in God : but all the divine perfections which took the part of innocent man, while he continued faithful to the law of his creation, render God terrible to fallen nature ; there can be no happy knowledge of God with a satisfaction to the soul, without a recovery of his lost interest.

That knowledge which renders us as happy as we can be in this world, is to know God in covenant our God ; to know God as our Father, Christ as our Mediator, to know Christ as a surety paying our debts, and God as a creditor accepting the payment for us, to know God in his eternal counsels as a Father, to know Christ in all his offices as our perfect Redeemer, settling and securing our happiness upon a stable bottom ; to know Christ as our Lord, *John* 20. 28 ; to know God so as to be accepted by him, and to know Christ so as to *be found in him*, *Phil.* 3. 8, 9 ; to know God not only as a pardoning God in his nature, but a pardoning God to our souls. Such a knowledge God promises. *They shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest, for I will forgive their iniquity*, *Jer.* 31. 34 ; as also a knowledge of him as our Saviour and Redeemer, *Isa.* 6. 16. That is a happy knowledge, when we can say with Paul, *Christ who loved me, and gave himself for me*, *Gal.* 2. 20, when we can feel Christ dwelling in us by faith, *the hope of glory*, *Col.* 1. 27. A speculative knowledge is contemplation, this is fruition ; that elevates us in admiration, this springs up in affection ; that is like the knowledge of a picture, where the features of the person are commended by strangers to them ; this like the knowledge of the friend, whose picture it is, and the remembrance of the sweetness of his disposition, his cordial affec.

tions, &c. which possesses the soul with a more sensible delight, than others can take in the comeliness of the piece.

These four sorts of knowledge are not equally necessary: the speculative is necessary as a foundation; practical, essentially necessary; experimental and interested, necessary to the comfort of knowledge. The two first are necessary to the being of a christian; the two latter, to the well-being: the two first together, constitute our happiness; the two latter, sweeten our imperfect happiness in this world. Indeed experimental knowledge, and interested, are necessary in regard of the matter of the knowledge, though not in regard of the actual sense and knowledge. We cannot have any initial happiness, without the influence of God's grace, without a share in his favour; but both these may be without the actual sense and perception of them. Speculative, is knowledge received; practical, knowledge expressed; experimental, the relish of it; and interested, the foretaste of happiness. A speculative knowledge, is like that of the queen of Sheba's, at a distance; an experimental is like her sight of the order and glory of Solomon's court, that left no more spirit in her.

II. This knowledge of God is *necessary*. Religion and true grace, is called wisdom in the proverbs. Wisdom is the knowledge of the highest things: no wisdom without the knowledge of truth, therefore no wisdom without the knowledge of God, the prime truth, the chiefest good, whence all truth and goodness in other things flow. This is the portal: * no happiness can be without truth and goodness; all religion consists of them, all felicity is composed of them; truth to be known, goodness to be embraced by the creature, else no communication of happiness to it. Knowledge and love fit us for acquaintance with, and enjoyment of God: we actually embrace

* Nulla res qualiscunque est intelligi potest, nisi Deus prius intelligatur, is a maxim in the schools.

him by love, after we perceive him fit for our embraces by knowledge. Knowledge imprints the similitude and idea of the object upon the understanding, love draws out the soul to close with the object so understood. By knowledge, God conveys himself in his glorious perfections to our view; by love we give up ourselves to him: by knowledge we see God, by love we enjoy him. By knowledge we see what is enjoyable, and worthy our affection and fruition; by love we enjoy what we see. Still remember that this is not to be understood of a common knowledge of God, where the gospel is preached; it is such a knowledge which is given by Christ to those he hath a charge of; it is such a knowledge, that is not only the effect of Christ's universal power over all flesh; (for so the general preaching of the gospel is, whereby men attain a common knowledge); but such a knowledge as those only have who are *sanctified by faith*, *Acts 26. 18.* He had *power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life*, i. e. he had power to propagate the gospel among the Gentiles, that the knowledge of God might be given to those that had been given him by his Father; whereby it is manifest, that it is a knowledge different from the common knowledge of the gospel.

1. This was the subject matter of the *ancient gospel promises*. This God promised in the evangelical dispensation, when he would manifest himself in the riches of his glory, and treasures of his goodness to his creatures; *Thou shalt know that I am the Lord*, *Isa. 49. 23*; and the chief happiness of the church in the confluence of the Gentiles to her, as the foundation of all religion, is his manifestation to them, and their clear view of that manifestation; *And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day*, *Isa. 19. 21.* It is the peculiar of the gospel; *Then shall we know the Lord*, *Hos. 6. 3.* When the knowledge of God shall be spread over the world by the great Prophet, in the teachings of his Spirit, then should men have an ar-

dent zeal to increase in the knowledge of God. And in this knowledge, our spiritual life consists: we shall live in his sight; how? By the knowledge of the Lord. By the knowledge of God in this life, men have foretastes of the life to come. It is by the knowledge of God in Christ, that we see the sword of justice sheathed, which guarded heaven against us; the heart of mercy enlarged to open heaven for us. It discovers God calmed and appeased, gives us delightful views of him, and a secure and complete happiness.

2. There is no way of conveying happiness can be conceived *without this*. Our ignorance must be removed, whereby we may understand God, as well as our perversity, whereby we may seek him. All sin begins in folly, ignorance, and forgetfulness of God; *None that did understand and seek God, Psal. 14. 2.* First, *The fool hath said in his heart there is no God,* From that ignorance, sprung up corruption, and abominable works. What the Psalmist speaks of one, ver. 1, he speaks of all, *they are all gone aside,* ver. 2. 3, and the not understanding of God was the root of it, *Rom. 3. 11*; the root of our misery must be removed to plant that of our happiness. God hath ordered knowledge to be the first step to salvation, so that none are saved that come not in by the way of the knowledge of God revealed in the gospel; *Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth, 1 Tim. 2. 4.* The gospel being nothing else but a manifestation of God in Christ, a knowledge of this precedes the application of salvation. * As the sun does not make his heat to be known, but by his beams; so God does not save according to his ordinary dispensation, but by the knowledge of himself; though the discovery of himself in divers ages, hath been various, and by degrees. As the light at the dawn is more obscure, than that which is near the approach of the

* Amyraut. de l'Evangile, page 148, 149.

sun to the horizon ; so there was a more obscure knowledge of God, and the Redeemer, at the time of the first promise.

Adam might not know well what to think of God, when he saw himself expelled Paradise, just after a gracious promise of a deliverer. It was somewhat brighter at the giving the law, when God would give man some dark shadows and pictures of Christ ; and when himself would be known by his name Jehovah, and the conduct of his angel. It was clearer in the times of the prophets, when the chariot of the sun of righteousness was approaching to the world, and the light broke out before him ; but a more glorious discovery, when this sun did arise, and appeared in the earth ; yet from first to last, every dispensation was made up of some discovery of God, the manifestation of his name, the declarations and and representations of the Messiah. The knowledge of God and the Redeemer, being the design of God in every age of the world, is no less necessary now than it was then. And indeed the knowledge of no other thing can confer a blessedness upon us. Whatsoever makes another happy, must be greater and better than that which is made happy ; but since nothing in the world is better than the soul of man, all the knowledge of inferior things cannot constitute him blessed. The knowledge of God and Christ can only fill the insatiable mind, satisfy the vast desires, and settle the staggering soul.

3. The happiness of God consists in the *knowledge of himself*, his own perfections, and *delight* in them.

* God is the object of his own happiness. The knowledge of God himself, is the felicity of God. No being is really happy, without reflection upon and knowledge of that happiness. If God should be happy by the knowledge of any thing else but himself, that which he did contemplate and know, would be

* Engubin. de perenni Philos. lib. 4. cap. 13.

greater and better than God, because his happiness would depend upon it; felicity can never be in any thing inferior; God hath nothing higher and better than himself to contemplate. This gave him a satisfaction before the world was, and this would still be his blessedness, if all things should be reduced to the depths of nothing. Since therefore he created the world, to communicate himself and his own happiness to the rational creature, felicity cannot be attained by any thing less than the knowledge of the supreme good, according to the creature's measures. The angels themselves are only blessed in the contemplation of him, and affection to him; in being encompassed with his bright rays, and having their affections inflamed by him; *They behold the face of God, Matt. 18. 10.* As God's knowledge and fruition of himself makes up his felicity, so the knowledge and fruition of God composes our happiness.

4. The happiness of heaven, which is the ultimate and complete happiness of the soul, *consists* in a knowledge of God. The sight of God is made by our Saviour the reward of purity of heart; *The pure in heart shall see God, Matt. 5. 8.* And to see him as he is, in the glory of the other world, *1 John 3. 2, 3,* when all the rational faculties shall be satisfied with light, and the desires replenished with love. The privation of this knowledge is hell; the punishment consists in a banishment *from the presence of the Lord, 2 Thes. 1. 9.* If felicity in the highest region, consists in a sight and knowledge of God; the happiness of the soul must consist in the same, according to the imperfect degrees. If a perfect happiness cannot be without a perfect knowledge, imperfect cannot be without a partial knowledge. When we are acquainted with him, we are not only at peace, but we can *delight* ourselves in the Almighty, *and lift up our faces unto God, Job 22. 21, 26.* Knowledge of God here, is the dawn of heaven, knowledge hereafter, the meridian of it.

5. This is that which Satan endeavours most to hinder. He is the enemy of man's happiness: he envies man a better state than himself hath: his time is spent in barring the door against it. The course he takes, is to bemist the understanding faculty, that the *light of the gospel of Christ might not shine into it*, 2 Cor. 4. 4. He put our first parents upon the knowledge of other things, to deprive them of the knowledge of God. He is always pecking at this seed of knowledge. If he cannot kill it, he will sow some cockle to choke it. All errors in the mind have the devil's blessing; and knowledge, his curse. His kingdom is a kingdom of darkness. Light is an enemy to his dominion; and he to light. When the knowledge of God breaks in upon the heart, Satan *fall like lightning from heaven*, as well as at the preaching of the gospel by the disciples, *Luke* 10. 18. It expels his, and introduces another empire. This is our happiness, which is the devil's grief. That must be necessary for us, which God's, and our great enemy took all the pains to stifle.

PART III.

THE NECESSITY OF KNOWLEDGE PROVED.

No motion towards God without it—God cannot be worshipped without it—No obedience to God without it—No grace without it—Faith—Desire—Love—Joy—Repentance—Patience—Without knowledge no grace can be exercised—Growth in grace depends upon knowledge—Essential to continuance in grace—Essential to happiness in life—In heaven.

III. **IN** *what respects* is this knowledge of God necessary. We owe duty to God as we are creatures, we are unable to perform it as we are guilty offenders; we must know God to know our duty, we must know Christ to know the way of performing it; we must know God therefore in the perfections of his nature, and Christ in the sufficiency of his mediation. We must know God in his ravishing goodness, his affrighting justice, his condescending mercy, his adorable wisdom, his unshaken veracity; we must know him as offended by sin, as pacified by Christ; without the one we shall not be humbled, without the other we shall not approach to him; we must know him in his precepts, else how can we obey him? In his promises, else how can we trust him? We must know Christ in his offices, as an atoning priest, as an instructing prophet, a protecting and governing king. We must know him in his transactions with his

Father, descent to the word, his return to heaven; in his humiliation on earth, exaltation in heaven; we must know him upon the cross and upon the throne, and the ends of both his states; *Know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, Phil. 3. 10.* How else can we *be conformed to his death*, or have confidence in his life? We must know him in his nature, without which we cannot have any knowledge either of the truth or efficacy of his satisfaction; the truth of it depended upon the reality of his humanity, the efficacy upon the strength of his divinity; without this knowledge, how can we believe in him? How can we love him? How can we perform those acts which are necessary to our salvation? This is a knowledge above the knowledge of nature: that is too polluted to be a spring of any spiritual action, raised love, or hearty reliance. It is not a knowledge of God, by rational deductions, but spiritual illuminations. The knowledge of God in the creatures, is as the dawn; the knowledge of God in the scripture, is as the day-spring. But what is either dawn or day-spring to a blind eye? The day-spring may be in the world, yet not in our hearts; we cannot work without light, and though there be the greatest light, we cannot work without sight.

That which is precedent to eternal life, cannot be without the knowledge of God.

1. Without it there can be no *motion* towards God or for God. Without a natural knowledge of God, we can never think of him, or have any natural motions to him; without a spiritual knowledge, we cannot perform any spiritual action. Without knowledge we cannot act as rational creatures, because all action tends to rest. No creature acts for that end, that it may always act; but acts for some end wherein it may acquiesce. That which is our proper rest must be known, we can never else order our motions to it. Every thing that hath rational or sensitive life,

must have some kind of knowledge to act suitable to its station in the world, and the nature it is endowed with. A beast cannot live without some knowledge, by natural instinct, of the proper food for the maintaining of the life of it ; a man cannot act rationally, though he have the shape and life of a man, without a habit of first principles which is by nature put into him ; so neither can a man act spiritually without truth put into the heart by grace, as an indwelling and abiding habit, a truth known, and a truth dwelling in us, and *abiding with us for ever*, 2 John ver. 2.

There are *the first principles of the oracles of God, and of the doctrine of Christ to be known*, Heb. 5. 12. and 6. 1, before we can go on to a spiritual perfection ; answering in a spiritual creature, to those first principles which are in every man by nature, without which he cannot act as a rational creature. The apostle implies the necessity of those principles, while he blames them for sticking there without making a further progress. As knowledge is necessary to the being of any action, so a various kind of knowledge is necessary to the various kinds of actions. Natural knowledge is necessary to natural actions. Moral knowledge, to moral actions ; so supernatural knowledge is necessary to supernatural actions. As the acts are, so must the knowledge be ; supernatural acts cannot flow from an understanding stuffed only with natural principles, no more than rational acts can be the products of a brutish fancy and instinct ; that is, as a beast cannot act rationally, unless he had the reason of a man ; so a man cannot act spiritually, unless he hath the understanding of a christian : and understanding given, whereby to *know him that is true*, who ought to be the proper centre of all our actions, 1 John 5. 20. The whole body is dark if the eye be so, Matt. 6. 22, 23 ; the whole body of a man's acts are acts of darkness, if the mind be blind. As the mind is, so the nature is ; corruption of nature began in wrong notions received in the

mind, whence those actions sprung which laid Adam and his posterity as low as hell, without the grace of God.

There must be then other notions in the mind, and other principles in the heart, before we can be fit for recovery out of natural misery. While the eye of the soul remains in darkness, all our perceptions will be tinctured with that corruption: a suffusion in the eye, will cause a confusion in the acts; what the eye is to the body, that is the understanding to the soul. The truth was in Jesus, it must be in us as it was in him; not as a loose notion, which would have engendered staggering motions in the service of God, and work of his mediation; but as a rooted habit, a law in his heart, established as firm in his heart, as he was in the sanction. Since therefore all our actions towards God, are to be both a reasonable and a spiritual service; there must be a reasonable and a spiritual knowledge, as the foundation, to raise up action as the building.

(1.) There can be no *worship* of God without it. Since God made us for his own glory, that we might do those things whereby he might be honoured, we must know the excellency of his nature, and what is suitable to him: it is impossible to glorify him, of whose honour and greatness we are wholly ignorant, *Psa.* 119. 125. David was God's servant, had a desire to serve him, and therefore desires God to give him understanding that he might know his testimonies. Worship is the fruit of knowledge. God promises to be known of the Egyptians in the time of the gospel, and then they should do sacrifice and oblation, *Isa.* 19. 21. The Egyptians knew there was a God, a supreme God, but they never worshipped him till they came to know him in the gospel revelation. *In that day*, he would be known to them; in what day? In the day when they should speak the language of Canaan, ver. 18. In the day when he should send them a *Saviour*, ver. 20. There is no worship acceptable to God without the knowledge of Christ, and

access by him. Daniel opened his window, and prayed to God towards the temple, a type of Christ. He that comes to God, must not only know that he is; but he must know that he is a *rewarder*, *Heb.* 11. 6; not by a natural knowledge, (for so the heathens both knew the being of God, and the bounty of God), but a distinct knowledge of God, and as a rewarder and acceptor in Christ; for that the apostle means when, in describing this way of worship, and giving examples of it, he gives instances of the faith of the worshippers, and their respecting God in Christ.

[1.] Without this knowledge of God, we should never worship him in a *right manner*. We must know that he is, before we can direct any religious act to him, so we must know what he is, before we can direct any religious act to him in a right manner. If we would worship him out of love, we must know that he is amiable; if with fear, we must know that he is powerful and just. Whatsoever the principle of the worship is, it must have knowledge for the foundation. Without a knowledge we cannot affect him, without a strong knowledge, we cannot love him ardently. If our love be low, our worship will be slight, and want that affection which is a necessary ingredient in it; according to the weakness of our knowledge, is the slightness of all our acts towards God. When we understand not his justice, we shall presume upon him; when we are ignorant of his glorious majesty, we shall be rude with him; unless we understand his holiness, we shall leap out of sin to duty; and the risings of our lusts will be as nimble as the desires of our souls. If we are ignorant of his excellency, we shall want humility before him: if we have not a deep sense of his omniscience, we shall be careless in his presence, full of roving thoughts, guilty of vain-babbling, as if he wanted information, *Matt.* 6. 6, 7. Ignorance renders worship false, as well as zeal erroneous, *Rom.* 10. 2. If we worship God from custom, and not from knowledge of him, we render him no better a worship than we should render to the impostor

Mahomet, if his religion were the religion of our country.

[2.] We should be apt to worship some *falsity and fancy instead of God*. Such a one that knows not God, would be as easily induced to worship some angel or saint in a glorious apparition : as a man that comes to court to see the king, and knew him not, might be apt to imagine that some person of quality he saw richly drest, and bravely attended, might be the prince. The heathens, having not the knowledge of God, stamped every great benefactor a deity ; and adored every one that was highly useful to their country as a god.

Without a knowledge of him we shall be apt to seize upon any thing from which we find assistance, as a God ; and, like some heathens, worship the first thing we meet in a morning. If we know not God, yet since we have naturally a notion that there is a God, we shall be apt to have false conceptions, and misrepresentations of him. To worship what we misconceive, is not to worship the true God, but a God coined and moulded by our own fancy : and since false conceptions of God are degradings and disparagements to him, all worship guided by them is a worship of that notion and image we have set up in our mind, and not a worship of the true God. It is at best a worship like that of the Athenian idolaters, a worship of an unknown God, *Acts 17. 23*, they knew not who he was, and they knew not why they worshipped him. Certainly as worship is a flower in the crown of the Deity, so a worship of him according to his infinite perfections, is a debt we are bound to pay, and therefore bound to know him, that we may give him his due ; otherwise we shall worship not a Scripture-God, but a fancy-god ; a god made up by the *capricios* of our own brains, and modelled according to our own genius.

That is an observable and difficult passage, *Have you offered to me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel, Amos 5. 25.*

Did they not offer sacrifices to God? The worship of Moloch was entertained in the following ages: God denies that they worshipped him all that forty years: what if we should conjecture this as the reason, because all the while they had notions of God according to the Egyptian idols? The adoring the calf, was but an imitation of the Egyptian worship: while they had a false notion of God, likening him to the Egyptian Apis, all the worship they performed to the true God, being tainted with this notion and conceit, was not a worship of God. *Did you offer to me*, when you had such ridiculous and unworthy conceptions, that you could find out nothing in the whole frame of nature as an image to represent me, but that of a calf? It was a sign, what unworthy conceits of me did lodge in your minds, which rendered your worship unacceptable and displeasing to me; which conceits were not displaced from their heads by the breaking of the idol.

[3.] Such an ignorant worship is certainly *idolatry*. It is, not only a wrong object draws upon men the guilt of idolatry, but a right object worshipped in a wrong manner. When we worship him not suitably to his perfections, or not according to his command, *Lev. 17. 3, 4, 7.* God commanded that an ox, or lamb, or goat, intended for sacrifice, should be brought to the door of the tabernacle; not killed in the camp, or out of it; if they did, he would count them guilty of blood, and ver. 7, esteems it no more than as a sacrifice offered to devils; the tabernacle being a type of Christ, *Heb. 9. 11*, this command signified, that whatsoever was offered to God out of Christ, was of no value to him; as hateful as murder, and esteemed by him, as if it had been offered to devils.

* Since therefore nature cannot represent God in his brightest apparel to us, we cannot worship God by all our natural knowledge of him; for as by nature we rather know what God is not, than what he is; so

by nature we may rather tell what worship is not worthy of him, than what is. We cannot then worship God, without the knowledge of him. We cannot know him in Christ by all the strength of nature, without divine revelation. And indeed it was a natural notion among the heathens, not to receive a form of worship, but what had a stamp of a divine authority; therefore all those lawgivers who settled any religion among them, pretended an intimate acquaintance with some of their esteemed deities, to make their form of worship entertainable. There is a necessity therefore of the knowledge of God, and of Christ, to present a worship to God acceptable to him.

(2.) There is no *obedience* to God, without the knowledge of him. The will of God is the rule of obedience, and Christ is the pattern of obedience. Obedience to God is an imitation of God in righteousness and holiness; we must therefore know the perfections of God, which we are to imitate, as well as the law of God, according to which we are to regulate our actions. Obedience therefore is described *, to be nothing else but knowledge digested into will, affections, and practice. The motion of the will cannot be regular, without a touch of the understanding; if the spring of the will's motion be from the affections and appetite only, it is an erroneous motion in regard of the order of nature, though to a right object. Now where there is a defect in the first concoction, there will be a defect in the second and third: defect in knowledge, will cause an error in practice. *ibid.*

Alienation from *the life of God*; i. e. from an imitation of his life, as well as animation by a living principle contrary to him, is rooted in the *blindness of the heart*, *Eph. 4. 18*; and the reason men take steps from one sin to another, and are fruitful in iniquity, is, because they *know not the Lord*, *Jer. 9. 3*. When

men are ignorant of the true God, they will not want Pharaoh's apology for their sin, *Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? Exod. 5. 2.* The whole mass of vice in the world arises from the false ideas of God, whom men shape according to their depraved fancies ; as the Ethiopians paint the image of their gods black, according to their own dark colour. Hence men receive encouragements to all kinds of vice, when they think God such an one as themselves. There was no truth nor mercy among the ten tribes, because there was *no knowledge of God in the land, Hos. 4. 1, 2* ; had they known the nature of God, they could not have sinned at such a rate, as if they had passed beyond the limits and censure of any law.

All obedience arises from knowledge. As error in knowledge was the first deformity of man and the cause of all the rest, so the knowledge of God is the first line the Spirit draws upon the soul, whence, as from the first matter, all those beautiful graces that appear in every region of the soul, are formed. Every action of obedience, as it must be quickened with grace, so it must be informed with knowledge. Holiness must be a holiness of truth, springing up as a branch from truth as a root, *Eph. 4. 24.* True holiness, or in the Greek, holiness of truth. As all rebellion against God steams up from false conception of him, so goodness and holiness break out of a sound notion of him. The mind is first renewed ere the *new man is created in righteousness, Eph. 4. 23, 24.* The apostle renders it impossible for a man to know God and willingly break his commands, and gives such a pretender to divine knowledge no better term than that of a liar ; *He that saith I know him, and keeps not his commands, is a liar, and the truth is not in him, 1 John 2. 4,* he hath not a grain of a divine habit of truth resident in his heart. *Know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart,* is David's directory to Solomon, *1 Chron. 28. 9.*

There is no service without knowledge, no sincere service without a spiritual knowledge of God in covenant. As ignorance of God is the cause of sin, so the knowledge and sense of him is the best antidote against it. Men cannot sin freely under an acquaintance with infinite fury. The common knowledge of God and Christ brings forth some fruits of a sort of obedience in men, and cleanses them from the common and barefaced pollutions of the world; the common knowledge of God hinders many wicked men from hurting in his holy mountain. What more glorious fruits than bare appearances would the spiritual knowledge of God and Christ produce and ripen in the world? *2 Pet. 2. 20.* If we know him in the glory of his grace, in the amiableness of his nature, what a choice delight should we have in our approaches to him and our actions for him? The more clearly he is understood, the more he is beloved, and the more he is beloved, the more readily he is obeyed. *The angels that behold his face, run most cheerfully to perform his errands, Psa. 103. 20;* and no doubt but the perfect illumination of the glorified soul is a partial cause of the steadiness of their wills. Whatsoever looks like obedience, and is not informed by knowledge, is no more an act of true obedience, than the action of a man in his sleep can be called a human action, since it is no product of his reason, but a start of his volatile fancy. *Paul's* questions were orderly when he was charged by Christ, first, *Who art thou?* Then, *What wilt thou have me to do?* Let me know whom I am to obey.

2. *No grace* can be without the knowledge of God. Some knowledge of God may be without grace, the devils are as much filled with one as they are empty of the other. But it is not conceivable how grace can be without knowledge. The knowledge of God in the text may be called eternal life, because all graces which are the seed of eternal life grow up from that as a root. In the change of the soul there is an act of vision before an act of trans-

figuration, the removing the veil before the turning the heart, 1 *Cor.* 3. 16. The eye is opened, light darts upon the understanding, and thence beams upon the will. The *glory of God* is beheld, before the frame of the heart is changed, 1 *Cor.* 3. 18. The whole work of grace is therefore called *light*, as the whole state of nature is called *darkness*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 9 ; as the understanding is the leading faculty, so knowledge, the privilege of the mind, is the directing principle, that leads, and the will follows : the enlightenings of the one make men immediately capable of the quickenings of the other. As the common knowledge of God makes men capable of sin, which a beast, because of the want of understanding, is not ; so the special knowledge of God in Christ puts men in a capacity for grace. The philosopher determines that moral virtues cannot be without intellectual. All divine motions in the soul are regular : every wheel in the watch moves in due order ; the faculties are not jumbled together, the understanding commands and the will obeys. Light first discovers, and will embraces.

* The new creation as well as the old begins with a *fiat lux*, whence all the creatures were to derive their beauty, and are more excellent and serviceable as they are endued with a more sparkling light ; the knowledge of God and Christ is the chief ingredient which makes the composition of the inner man. As without light there could not be a visible world, so without this there cannot be a spiritual. As the common engrafted notions of God, left in men's hearts by nature, are the root from which common moral virtues grow, so the spiritual knowledge of God in the gospel is the root from whence divine graces branch themselves. No form without matter, no grace without knowledge of God. No active principle can be without an object ; God is the object of grace. Whence the new creation of a man is called a *tran-*

slation from darkness, Col. 1. 13, and renewed men are called *light in the Lord*, Eph. 5. 8, when the mind which was stuffed with base and unworthy opinions of God, is made by the Spirit, the candle of the Lord, spreading its light through the whole man.

All those things which pertain to godliness, whereof grace is not the meanest, are given *through the knowledge of him*, 2 Pct. 1. 2, 3. This knowledge of God and Christ shining upon the heart of a natural moral man, makes his moral virtues to commence spiritual graces; as the more generous and commendable acts of a beast would cease to be brutish actions, and become human, if he had a rational understanding infused into him. Without the knowlege of God's justice we shall not fear him, without knowledge of his ability and fidelity we shall not trust him. Without knowledge of his goodness we shall not seek to him, and without a knowledge of his majesty we shall not humble ourselves before him. So that without the knowledge of God there will be no grace in the principle or habit.

As, to instance, in particular graces,

(1.) *Faith* cannot be without the knowledge of God and Christ. Without the knowledge of God we know not the ultimate object of faith, without the knowledge of Christ we know not the immediate object of faith, and the way to come to God. This grace therefore is set in a double seat by divines, in the understanding and will; it is properly a consent of the will, which cannot be without assent in the mind. Knowledge is antecedent to faith in order of nature; *I know whom I have believed*, 2 Tim. 1. 12. *That you may know and believe that I am he*, Isa. 43. 10. Who can read that does not know his letters? who can believe that understands nothing of the perfections of God or offices of Christ? What image is in the inward sense, was first in the outward organ; what fiducial frame there is in the will, was first ushered in by assent in the understanding; *He that comes to God, must know that he is*, Heb. 11. 6. The

knowledge of the bare existence of God will not bring the creature to him, but the knowledge that he is a *rewarder* will, because this knowledge includes an apprehension of some good in the object known, and so hath a spirit of life in it to quicken the affections, and elevate the heart, which was before dead to any such motion.

That knowledge which acquaints a man with no good in the object known, will never excite any motion to it. No man can come to God who is infinitely above him, unless he knows him to be infinitely good and ready to receive him. Who will apply himself to a prince or any other man for help, whom he thinks to be severe, sour, tyrannical, one more like to scoff at his misery than relieve him? There is therefore a necessity of the knowledge of God, as a God of tender compassion, and therefore a necessity of the knowledge of Christ, in whom only he discovers himself to be a gracious Father. The spiritual knowledge of him in Christ is as an emission of virtue from the loadstone that draws the iron to cleave to it. We must know the goodness, the fountain, and his faithfulness, the executor of promises, and his power that enables him to be as great and good as his word. We never reasonably trust a man that we know not fit to be trusted; we cannot trust a God whom we know not to be the highest goodness. Men by reason know that there is a God, but it is so dim in the discovery of his perfections, that it sees not light enough to raise it up to any close act of a fiducial dependance on him. The discovery of God in Christ in the heart sets the whole man a crying out, *Return to thy rest, O my soul.*

(2.) There can be no *desire* for God without it. The Israelites' stomachs were never sharpened for Canaan, but rambling towards Egypt, till they tasted the grapes of the country. The apprehension of God as true makes us adore him, the apprehension of God as good makes us desire him. The more clearly

we know his perfections, the more fervently we shall desire both to enjoy him and imitate him. How soon will such knowledge bud in desires, and blossom and flower in good affections? *If thou hadst known, thou wouldest have asked, John 4. 10.* If thou hadst a clear knowledge, thou wouldest have had an eager affection. The clearer the representations, the more nimble the desires. Doubtful and wavering conceits of the goodness of a thing, keep back the appetite from any motion. If we know not how full a spring God is, and ready to emit his streams, how can we thirst for his boundless communications to us? Where there hath been a relish, there will be an appetite, *1 Pet. 2. 3*; *desire* of the word riseth from a *taste* that the Lord is gracious. Knowledge of a thing always precedes our appetite to it. A toad, not having the knowledge of its own venomous nature, and the excellency of other creatures, can never desire the being stripped of his own, or invested with the other.

This desire after God springs not from a bare speculation, but a strong impression, a spiritual taste; for a bare speculation hath no more strength to make a motion in the will, than the poetical descriptions of far countries can persuade a potent prince to take a long voyage for the conquest, or a merchant to venture his stock thither for a trade. The more distinct and savoury our notions of God and his goodness are, the more ardent flame will be in our wills. The more distinctly a man conceives of the excellent relish and wholesomeness of this or that kind of meat, the more will his appetite be invited to taste of it, especially if before he hath sensibly enjoyed a satisfaction in it: and indeed a strong appetite is a great sign of a spiritual illumination. It is ignorance of God chokes any longing for him, and makes us either not to desire the enjoyment of him, or beg for it very faintly. Men that never put up a quick prayer to him, never had any knowledge of God in them, and when any of us

pray faintly, our knowledge of God is not actuated in us. Without some knowledge of God, men will rather shake off all thoughts of him, all wishes for him, and no more desire the fruition of him than a blind mole desires to see the light of the sun. Their language is with those in Job, *depart from us*, not come unto us, *Job* 21. 14. Where there is no knowledge, there can be no fruition, and where no desire of knowledge, there can be no desire of enjoyment.

(3.) There is no *love* to God without knowledge of him. Though a thing be made up of delights, and hath an amiableness interwoven in every part, yet if it be not known, it cannot be affected. We cannot love God with *all our hearts*, with the affective part, till we first love him with *all our minds*, with all our reason and intelligent part, *Mark* 12. 30. Love always supposes the knowledge of the beloved object, since it is nothing else but *perfectum judicium de bono amato*. Good cannot allure the affections unless it be apprehended, and knowledge cannot inflame the affection unless the object be imagined as good; both must concur to the exciting love. None can pay a debt of love to any thing, till he knows it justly deserving and challenging that love: no man in the world can be beloved by another, till something be seen in him as lovely, either the wisdom of his head, the sweetness of his nature, the beauty of his person, or the obligingness of his carriage. How can we have any elevated affection to God, unless we understand the amiableness of his nature, the infiniteness of his perfections, and the expression of them for the good of mankind? How can it be expected any can have a heave of affection to Christ, who understands nothing of those treasures of knowledge, grace, and wisdom, wherewith he is replenished; who knows nothing spiritually and feelingly of the design of his coming, his low condescension, his yearning compassion, his full goodness, and his sincere affection?

Without it we shall value God and Christ no more than a swine does a pearl, a child a learned book, or a prince a heap of rubbish: no more than the Jews did the divinity of our Saviour, hid in the weak casket of his humanity. The beams must be united together in the burning glass, and shine directly upon the heart, before the affections will take fire.

The *daughters of Jerusalem* seemed to scorn him, and reproach the hot affections of the spouse as if unworthily placed, or too fond of their exercise, till a glimpse of knowledge by her description quickened them with some heat of love, which kindled in them desires of seeking him. *What is thy beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us? Cant. 5. 9.* Whereupon she begins a description of his beauty, and then they desire to seek him with her, *Cant. 6.*

1. So soon may a little spiritual knowledge of Christ dropped into the heart, turn a scoffer into an admirer. Had the Jews known Christ to be *the Lord of glory*, they had never crucified him, *1 Cor. 2. 8.* They had turned adorers instead of murderers. The mind must be spiritually illuminated to see God in an evangelical lustre, it must be filled with astonishing and affecting notions of God, before the heart can have a valuation of him, and a disesteem for the things of this world. The apostle indeed saith, *Whom having not seen you love, 1 Pet. 1. 8,* but he does not say, whom having not known you love: there is a knowledge of invisible things by faith, which takes possession of the heart by the ear, and attracts the affections. Ignorance of God must be removed before an affection to him will take place, since it is not only a cause but a part of our enmity to him, *Eph. 4. 18.* We may have the knowledge of a scholar without the love of a christian, but we cannot have a christian love without a christian knowledge, and savoury apprehension of God and Christ. Unless we know the nature of God, we may love some false thing instead of God, and unless we know the nature of

Christ, the union of his two natures, and the fulness of grace, we can never love him after a right manner.

(4.) There can be no *joy and delight* in God. I mean that delight which is a duty, not that which is only God's dispensation, an active, not a passive delight. Who can delight in music that cannot hear it? or be pleased with the scent of a rose that cannot smell it? Who can delight in God that hath no sense of the goodness of his nature, and the happiness of fruition? Who can delight in his ways, who does not understand him as good and indulgent in his precepts, as he is sweet and bountiful in his promises? If we did know him, we should be as easily drawn to rejoice in him, as by ignorance we are induced to run from him. Such charms would be transmitted to our hearts, as would constrain a joy in them in spite of all other delights in perishing pleasures. Knowledge of God is a necessary preface to spiritual joy in him, *Psal* 104. 34; first by a sweetness tasted in meditation, and then a delight in God, the object of it, and according to the apprehension we have of the object, are the degrees of our delight in it. It is all one to a blind man to be in a palace richly furnished, or a dungeon hung with cobwebs. What pleasure can a man, ignorant of God's nature and delightful perfections, and that represents him through some mistaken glass, which imprints unworthy notions of God in his mind, what pleasure can such a man take in approaching to God, or what greater freedom can he have in coming to him, than a malefactor in being brought before a judge?

(5.) There is no *repentance* without the knowledge of God. The *times of ignorance* and impenitence are one and the same, *Acts* 17. 30. If there be no right conception of the nature of God, there can be no sense of the evil of sin, and the contrariety of our nature to him.* But when the soul sees God and

* *Contraria juxta se posita magis illucescunt.*

sees itself, it will be filled with self-aborrence. How can we bewail our offences, if we understand not the purity of his holiness, the severity of his justice, the tenderness of his mercy, the irresistibleness of his power, and the inevitableness of his wrath?

(6.) There is no *fear* of God without it. As the justice of God and his anger must be apprehended before he can be feared slavishly, so the majesty of God and his goodness must be understood before he can be feared filially. Who can stand in awe of a majesty he is ignorant of? * Men, knowing not God's nature, have often presumed so much upon his mercy, that they have been destroyed by his justice, as some through ignorance of the true quality of a fruit, have found their death where they expected their pleasure.

(7.) There is no true *patience* without it. Since true blessedness consists in the spiritual and affectionate knowledge of God as the supreme good, no man can be truly content under crosses, who does not apprehend the goodness and fulness of God and Christ. All patience not founded upon this, is a brutish stupidity. The apostle lays the courage of the believing Hebrews upon their spiritual illumination. *After ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions, Heb. 10. 32.* When their light was great, their patience was steady; and they had not only a contentedness under sufferings, but a joy in them; because they had an experimental sense and knowledge of God as a rewarder, and had some sweet foretastes of the rich inheritance he had provided for them. *You took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that you have in heaven a better and more enduring substance, ver. 34.* The feeling of Christ, and the tasting his sweetness, is the best antidote against temptation. He that knows no richer sweetness than is in the devil's baits, will easily be exposed to the danger of them. Without this knowledge, the slight impressions on men will be like a few heat

* Barlow on Tim. part. 1. p. 29.

drops, dried up by a scorching temptation almost as soon as they fall.

As none of these graces can be without the knowledge of God and Christ; so,

(2.) Without it, there can be no *acting of any grace*. All grace is nothing else but an imitation of God, a resemblance of God's perfections in the creature, and the acting of it a representation of the lineaments of his divine virtues. *Be ye followers of God as dear children, Eph. 5. 1.* The copy must be known, before it can be imitated. It is a conformity to the image of Christ, *Rom. 8. 29*: all grace is summed up in a conformity to God and Christ; for it is nothing but a restoration of the divine image, a re-implantion of that in the soul, which was defaced and lost by Adam; as the seal leaves the whole print upon the wax, even the least point engraven upon it; so does God and Christ upon the heart. Every grace is a member and part of the divine image, and answers in some proportion to some imitable perfection of God. If we know nothing of the lineaments of God, how can we make a report of his excellency to the world in our actions? How can we express ourselves in any virtue, if we know not the prototype, the first pattern? The want of the knowledge of God, made all the heathen virtues trivial things, mere shadows: the knowledge of God and Christ could only tincture and dye them into divine graces. Humility proceeding from some sordid humour, or by respects, is not a grace; but when it springs from a knowledge of the condescensions of God, or contrariety to God, or a knowledge of the humility of Christ, it is then a grace.

How can we return lively affections to him, if we know not the emanations of his love? How should we be at a loss for holiness, if we understood nothing of the holy nature of God, and his hatred to sin? How would the consideration of God's justice against sin, help us in the exercise of our justice in the mortification of our affections to it; and the knowledge

of the patience of God under affronts received by us, makes us patient and submissive under strokes inflicted by him ! It is this makes the christian more signal in gracious actions towards others. How readily would his love break out to others, in an imitation of God's love to man ? What a tender and compassionate disposition would be manifested to men, if there were an actuated knowledge of God's mercy and compassion to us ? The consideration of God's veracity, would render men faithful in promises. The perfections of God, if more spiritually known, would bring forth more of those pleasing fruits in the soul.

It is impossible an act can be without an object ; nothing is grace but as it is conversant about God, or hath a respect to God. There can be no act about an unknown object. There can be no form without matter, nor any acting of that form but in matter ; no grace without knowledge, no acting of grace but in knowledge. The frame of grace is raised upon the infused notions of God : illumination precedes renovation of the will. As the right motion of the will, supposeth an enlightened mind ; so the acting of grace in the will, implies a present and actuated knowledge of the object about which it is conversant. There is no faculty excited in any act, but by some object ; that object is not entertained at first in any power of the soul, but in the understanding, that first propounds the object, as worthy and suitable to be followed by the other powers of the soul, whose office it is to act.

All impressions upon the lower faculties, are made by the highest, as all motions depend upon the highest sphere in the heavens. There must therefore be a distinct knowledge of God ; God abstracted from his perfections, his power, holiness, faithfulness, love, is not the object about which any grace can be conversant ; but God as revealing himself, clothed with such excellencies as suit and answer the creature's necessities. If I act faith, I must conceive of his

power to relieve me. If I act faith upon his promise, I must conceive of his faithfulness and truth to make good his word. We cannot work without light, nor act grace without the knowledge of God and Christ. If we must be perfect as God is perfect, we must know the perfection of the copy we are to follow. The more knowledge we have of God, and of the nature, offices, and communications of Christ, the more distinct are the actings of grace.

(3.) No *growth in grace* without it. As the degrees of our knowledge are, so are the degrees of our grace. *You are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, Rom. 15. 14.* Growth in grace is promoted by the knowledge of Jesus Christ, *2 Pet. 3. 18*, the one is the root, the other the branch; the root may be without the branch, but the branch can never grow without a root. As the root is strengthened, so are the branches; what is in the root, is communicated to the branches. If love flames more vehemently, it is by the addition of the fuel of knowledge; *That your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, Phil. 1. 9.* Love, which is a grace that adorns us in the world, and is a part of the glory of heaven, burns hotter as our knowledge is clearer: a firm and stable knowledge is as necessary to the increase of love, as to the being of love; *Ἐπιγνῶσις* signifies a *clear* knowledge.

Fruitfulness in every good work depends upon the increase of the knowledge of God, as the fruit of the ground upon the dew of heaven; *Being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, Col. 1. 10.* The strength of grace is promoted by the increase of knowledge; *a man of knowledge increaseth strength, Prov. 24. 5;* the strengthening the foundation is a strengthening the building. All graces depend upon the increase of faith, and faith is the firmer by an increase of knowledge. *The path of the just, or his walk in the ways of God, is expressed by a shining or growing light, Prov. 4. 18.* As there was more truth, so there was more grace by Christ

than by Moses, *John* 1. 17. As there was but obscure truth under the law, so there was but weak grace; when truth shone, grace flourished; as the plants renew their strength with the spring's sun. The law made no such discoveries of God as were revealed by Christ: the communication of the greatest knowledge of God, was reserved for the honour of the great prophet; and the full effusion of grace, was reserved for the honour of his royalty.

All the declarations by the law, could not give so much knowledge of truth as the gospel, and therefore make no such impression of grace upon the soul. Truth and grace go hand in hand together, and spur on one another: truth excites grace, and grace spurs on to the enquiry after truth. Christ himself had not been full of grace, unless he had been full of truth, thoroughly acquainted with the nature of God, and the mysteries of his will; *Full of grace and truth, John* 1. 14. it is the fulness of his human nature, for he speaks of the word as made flesh and dwelling amongst us. And accordingly when he prays for the increase of the disciples' graces, and their progressive sanctification, he prescribes the means; *Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth, John* 17. 17. The word is nothing but a discovery of God; which affords motives to holiness, and can strengthen the soul against all the invasions of Satan, who envies grace, and endeavours to rifle it. A spiritual knowledge of God would spring up in delightful thoughts of him, and those would be as a refreshing influence to all the graces of the new man.

(4.) No *continuance* in grace without it. True grace cannot be totally lost, but it may miserably decay. True grace will decay, and pretended grace will quite wither without it. As it is impossible any man can close with God in Christ without a knowledge of him; so it is as impossible that he can persist in that state, without the continuance of that knowledge. Knowledge of God is part of the anointing of the Spirit which *teacheth the believer all things, 1 John* 2. 27. Grace

is the divine lamp in the soul, which lives and burns by the oil of the Spirit's teaching; a lamp will go out without oil to feed it; and grace will burn dim, without knowledge to supply it. The apostle owns the knowledge of Christ to be the anchor that keeps us from being *tossed to and fro like children*, *Eph. 4. 13, 14.*

Ignorance is the mother of inconstancy in the ways of God, the *unlearned and unstable* go by couples, *2 Pet. 3. 16.* Where there is no knowledge of God to ballast, there is no security against the force of winds and waves. Those that are unlearned in heavenly wisdom, will be unstable in heavenly ways. The want of root made the temporaries wither; unless we know God, we cannot *follow on to know him*, *Ios. 6. 3.* It is as natural for a saving knowledge of God to press on farther, as it is for a counterfeit knowledge to draw back. But an experimental sense will preserve the soul from apostacy; *Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst*, *John 4. 14*; i. e. he shall never thirst for any thing else; for this he cannot but thirst, till he comes to a full fountain. That is not a savoury knowledge of Christ, if it be not attended with a thirst for more. Where there is only a sensitive carnal apprehension of God and his truth, there may be some resolutions, some pangs, but the fit will quickly cease.

The silly conceit of bread and water from heaven, that should satisfy their hunger, and quench their thirst, which might free them from toil and sweat in the world, made some Jews with lively affections cry out, *Evermore give us this bread*, *John 6. 34.* Christ by bread meant himself; and by eating, he meant faith; they understood it of earthly bread, and had affections accordingly; but when they understood the truth of the case, they *turned their backs upon him*, ver. 66. How soon were their affections extinguished, which had nothing but a carnal apprehension for a foundation? It is a *full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God the*

Father and of Christ, that preserves a soul from seduction by enticing words, *Col. 2. 2, 4.*

3. No *comfort* can be without the knowledge of God and Christ. *Peace* as well as *grace is multiplied* by this, *2 Pet. 1. 2.* Acquaintance with God is the channel through which the blessings of peace flow into our souls, *Job 22. 21, 22, &c.* All joy in, or from God, presupposeth a knowledge of him; for spiritual joy is seated in the mind, not in the sensitive part of the soul. All the pleasure that rational creatures have, is by an act of their understanding. The light of knowledge, begets the light of joy and peace in the heart; as the light in the body of the sun begets the light and shine in the air. The assurance of understanding doth arise from the *acknowledgment of the mystery of God the Father and of Christ, Col. 2. 2.* Because the knowledge of those is a means to beget assurance. In the light of God we enjoy the light of comfort; *In thy light we shall see light, Psa. 36. 9.*

There may be a knowledge of God, and a *terror* with it. The devils' knowledge renders them less at ease in themselves, than an ignorance would: though their knowledge of God be greater than others, yet it is more distasteful to them: they have only a knowledge of God in his justice to terrify them, but no hopes of his mercy to pacify their troubles. Yet without it we can no more have any fruition of God, than a man, whose senses are bound up with sleep, can rejoice in the presence of beautiful pictures. As the operations of the will, depend upon the touch of the understanding; so the comforts of the soul, depend upon the clearness of the understanding, contemplating the object. The best good, though never so near us, cannot be comfortable to us while we are under the darkness of ignorance. Nor can there be any comfort without the knowledge of Christ.

There was in Adam no necessity of the knowledge of Christ, because there was no necessity of his knowledge of a Mediator in his innocent estate. He knew

God in his nature and in his personal relations, and his works of creation: but what a misery are we in, without the knowledge of Christ, as well as God! What pleasure can we have in the apprehensions of an offended and injured God, unless we know him in the methods of his reconciliation, which cannot be understood but by the knowledge of Christ, because no atonement is made by any but him? The more any man knows of God without Christ, the more he knows of a deplorable contrariety to him. What spark of joy can he have, unless he can see a way of bringing God down to him, or of his ascent to God, unless God would strip himself of his nature to converse with him, or he be unclothed of his corruption to be fit to converse with God? He sees terror as well as sweetness, wrath as well as grace. The knowledge of Christ, as receiving the darts of God's wrath upon himself to reflect upon the soul the beams of his grace, must step in, before the thoughts of God can be comfortable any more to us than to devils.

(1.) No comfort in *this life*. Without godliness there can be no rational satisfaction, and sensitive comforts deserve not the name of a rational contentment. *Godliness* and *contentment* are coupled together by the apostle, 1 *Tim.* 6. 6. Godliness is nothing but the spiritual and practical knowledge of the mysteries of God. Nothing can have any real comfort without answering and attaining the end of its being. The end of our creation was not simply to enjoy the creature, or satisfy our sense, but to glorify God, to observe the prints of God's goodness, and return the praise to him. The world was made for the manifestation of God's goodness, *the heavens declare the glory of God* materially, man is to give God the glory of it formally. Without this, man hath not a pleasure suitable to the end of his creation.

What praise now can any one render to God, who knows not the excellency stamped upon his works, knows not his glory and goodness manifested in redemption? All praise of God without understand-

ing is not pleasant to the offerer, and as unwelcome to God, as the scraping of a lute by an ignorant hand is to a delicate ear. We are to praise God *with understanding*, *Psa.* 47. 7. i. e. with a knowledge of his nature, his works, his excellencies in him. We lose the comfort of our being by not answering the end of our creation, and this we cannot do without a knowledge of God and Christ, and so lose the pleasure of those raptures, and extacies of joy, which an observation and praise of God fills the soul with in secret. What rise is there for this, if we are unacquainted with the matter and object of this praise?

(2.) No pleasure and comfort to one ignorant of God, if he were admitted *into heaven*. The happiness of heaven consists in a clear knowledge of God and a pure affection to him. It is as impossible for a man remaining ignorant of God to take any pleasure in him, were he admitted into the local heaven where God displays his glory, as for a blind man placed upon an high tower to delight in the most beautiful prospect, so long as he wants eyes to behold it. Such a one would want happiness in the midst of an ocean of it, as a milstone in the midst of the sea wants moisture in the centre, because of the thickness and hardness of its parts. He that takes no pleasure in enquiring after God and seeing him in the glass of the gospel, would take as little or less in seeing him *face to face*. An unenlightened mind could have as little delight in heaven by reason of its ignorance, as an unrenewed will could by reason of its impurity; A swine that understands not the delicacies of a musical air, would rather run away affrighted than diligently listen, and take more satisfaction in a puddle or heap of garbish, things suited to his sense and nature, than in those objects he hath no conception of.

PART IV.

THE PROPERTIES AND EFFECTS OF KNOWLEDGE.

The knowledge of God considered negatively—Affirmatively—Its effects—Transforming—Affective—Knowledge to be tried by affections—An active and expressive knowledge—This knowledge is life—The knowledge of God must be accompanied with suitable actions—Otherwise no better in God's account than ignorance—The least saving knowledge is active.

IV. **WHAT** are the properties of this knowledge of God and Christ, whereby it is distinguished from that knowledge, which is not saving and eternal life.

First, Negatively.

(1.) It is not an *immediate* knowledge of God and Christ. As we are acquainted with a man face to face, when we see his person, and view his features; we have no such knowledge of angels, much less of God. Nay the things of the world which are visible to us, are not known so much in their formal nature as by their operations, we do not immediately know the sun so much as by his beams enlightening the earth, and quickening and refreshing the spirits of all creatures. It is more especially true of our knowledge of God who is not known immediately in his nature, so much as by his excellent works of creation, provi-

dence, redemption, and the revelation of invisible mysteries in his word. The invisible things of God are understood not by immediate speculations about the nature of them, but by the things that are made, *Rom. 1. 20.* * Those things that are invisible in God, and that cannot be known or seen with an immediate view, shine forth in his works, both in the first forming them and the constant preservation of them; wherein he discovers such marks of an infinite power and inexpressible goodness, which is the glory of his godhead, that if they were represented in a glass, they could not be more visible.

He is encircled with that ocean of light through which no mortal eye ever pierced or can approach to; *He dwells in light to which no man can approach, whom none hath seen or can see, 1 Tim. 6. 16;* it is used to express the impossibility of an immediate knowledge of God; we see the created light of the sun overpowers the eyes of our body, how much more the glorious light of God the eyes of our souls, since he *clothes himself with light as with a garment? Psal. 104. 2.* As the sun though it discovers other things to us by its light, yet by reason of the greatness of its light hinders us from an immediate sight of itself; so though God discovers himself in other things to us by his light, yet it is too immense for us to have an immediate knowledge of God. In his appearance to the Israelites he was covered with a cloud to show the weakness of our understandings about divine things; and how easily is it dazzled at his ineffable brightness?

(2.) Nor is it a *comprehensive* knowledge. When the Psalmist had floods of precious thoughts of God in the day, the next morning he was as far from finding him out to perfection as before; *When I awake, I am still with thee, Psal. 139. 17. 18, i. e. I am where I was, I have made no further progress, but am to begin again, so infinite are thy perfections. Moses*

that was dignified with the greatest familiarity with God, could arrive no higher than the sight of his back parts. A beast by seeing our actions may better comprehend our nature, than we comprehend the nature of God. To know comprehensively is to contain, and the thing contained must be less than that which contains, and therefore if a creature could comprehend the essence of God he would be greater than God. It is infinitely more difficult for any creature to comprehend the nature and perfections of God, than it is easy upon the sight of his works to acknowledge there is such an incomprehensible being; he makes darkness his pavilion and hiding place. The comprehensive knowledge of God is only within himself, and none can know God as he knows himself, unless he were God, his name is *secret*, *Judges* 13. 18.

God is the highest in the rank of beings; the chiefest in the scale of good, the supreme in the nature of intelligent, man is the lowest of intelligent creatures; how can he that is in the lowest form of reasonable creatures mount up to the knowledge of the supreme Author of all beings? We are not able to conceive of God as he is, because our apprehensions take their first rise from sense and sensible objects. There must needs then be an infinite distance between our conceptions of God and his nature, as the conception that a man that never saw the sun hath of the sun, by the light of the candle which he hath seen, is far inferior to the glorious nature of that luminary. Christ only knows the Father, *and he to whom the Son will reveal him*, yet upon Christ's revelation no man can know God comprehensively; not for any weakness of revelation, but incapability in the creature. The ocean hath water enough to fill the largest vessel, yet it can give no more to it than the vessel is able to contain.

[1.] We cannot comprehend the *creatures that are near to us*. Not to speak of angels that are creatures of another sphere, whose nature we are not able to

measure, and whose appearances were formidable to the believers under the Old Testament, we find our reason twinkle at the sight of a star ; though we behold its sparklings, we cannot understand fully the nature and dimensions of it. How is our reason blocked by clouds of matter, from piercing into the nature of a stone we tread on ? How are we puzzled to know the soul of an ant, the forms of beasts and plants ? Is not the acutest reason too blunt to pierce into their hidden natures ? How are we then able to ascend into the cabinets of the Almighty Creator ? How blind are we in the nature of our own souls which we bear about in our bodies every day, and feel the operations of in every motion ? How then can we *by searching find out the Almighty unto perfection ?* If all the wit of world hath not been able to content the understanding of man, in the reason of the ebbs and floods of the sea, the intervals of an ague, the nature of the sun, the attractive virtue of the loadstone, and a thousand other things which nonplus the reason of man ; is it possible to comprehend God ? If we know not the works of nature, can we think to know the author of nature ? Are we ignorant of the nature of the effects, and shall we think fully to understand the cause of them, which infinitely surpasses them ? If we know not the world which is as a point, it cannot be thought that we can comprehend the circumference itself.

[2.] In heaven God shall not be *comprehensively* known. It is true there will be a fuller perception of God, and a clearer notion of him in heaven ; the infinite treasures of wisdom and goodness, which lie hid in God to be admired, will be then more clearly seen : yet God can never descend from his own infinity to be grasped by a created understanding. For in the highest pitch of glory, the soul is but finite ; and therefore still too short to inclose an infinite being in its understanding, even to an endless eternity. In heaven, the glorified soul is still but a creature ; hea-

ven glorifies our natures, but does not make our being infinite; and till a creature can mount to the pitch of a Creator, it can never understand the nature of the Deity.

When Moses desired to see God's *face*, or essence, *Exod.* 33. 18, that God might be known to him as the person of a man is known to another by the discovery of his face, God tells him not, thou *shalt not see*, or thou mayest not see; but *canst not see my face*, ver. 20, *for there shall no man see my face and live*, i. e. as the Jews expound it; * no created understanding can attain this. That one perfection of his love, which we are more sensible of, and are exhorted to know the length and breadth of; yet the apostle tells us in the same breath, that it passeth knowledge, *Eph.* 3. 17, 18, 19, and the peace of God, which is an effect of his love, *passeth all understanding*, *Phil.* 4. 7. And though it be said, *That we shall see him as he is*, 1 *John* 3. 2; it is most convenient to understand it of the sight of Christ in his visible human nature, at the day of judgment, and not of the essence of God; for he speaks of the appearance of God, understanding Christ's appearance, which the Scripture frequently speaks of. There will indeed in heaven, be a wider enlarging the faculty, and a fuller discovery of the object, greater sparklings of light and glory, enough to satisfy; yet still the perfections of God will be above our comprehensions; the understanding will be dilated and strengthened, a clear light put into it; which is not any species of God, but a spiritual principle created by God, to perfect the understanding for the contemplation of him.

[3.] The angels who have had the fullest vision of God since their creation, *cannot know God perfectly*. And that upon the same reason, because they are creatures; there must be some proportion between the faculty and the object, but there is none between a

* Maimon de Fundam. legis cap. 1 Sect. 10. page 6, 7.

finite understanding and an infinite essence. They know God in a more excellent manner, than other creatures can do in the world ; they stand before his face, they see the signs of his glorious presence ; but their contracted understandings cannot comprehend the essence of God, which hides itself in the secret place of eternity. If God could be grasped by any finite understanding, though angelical, he were not infinite. The angels signify as much by the covering their faces before the throne of the divine majesty, that the majesty of God is too mysterious for the most capacious understanding, *Isa. 6. 2.* * And therefore it is generally said that the human nature of Christ, though being straightly united to the divine nature, he did behold the divine essence, yet could not comprehend it, because the human nature was finite and a creature.

Nor can we have a comprehensive knowledge of *Christ* ; the Spirit takes of the things that are Christ's to show to the believers, *John 16. 14, 15.* But not all of Christ's, for all the things of Christ cannot be shown to any man ; as his divine nature, being infinite and incomprehensible. We know God, as we know the sea ; we behold the vastness of its waters, but we cannot measure the depths and abysses of it. Yet we may be said truly to see it, as we may touch a mountain with our hands, but not grasp it in our arms. We know God to be omnipotent and immense, but we cannot comprehend his power and immensity. Nor can we know the counsels of God ; we may as well expect to span the heavens, and inclose the sea in a nut-shell, as to understand those *judgments* which are *past finding out*, *Rom. 11. 33.* So that this is not the knowledge God requires of us, or that can be called our happiness, but that we should know what kind of God he is, merciful, just, wise, holy, true,

* Woll. compend. lib. 1. c. 16. the humanity of Christ did see God, ὅλον but not ὁλῶς.

and how those perfections are manifested in Christ. Yet because we cannot comprehend him, the more we ought, and the more we shall admire him. Our admirations of the brightness of the sun are greater, by how much the less we can look upon the body of it, without winking and shielding our eyes from the onset of his beams ; so should they be of God.

(3.) Neither is it a *perfect* knowledge of God in this life, so far as it is possible for a creature to know him, that is required. Our knowledge of God in this life, is as the knowledge of him in a glass, obscure, and apt to be dimmed by the steams and breath of our unworthy affections, and notions of him : we cannot arrive to great measures, because of the misty cloud upon our minds; the beam of sin in our eye ; our soul clogged with a fleshly clay, cannot ascend to a perfect knowledge of God. We are like a man closed up in a room, where light comes in at some chinks of the shutters ; and though the sun shine never so clearly, he cannot behold the glory of it, while he remains thus closed up. While we are in this dungeon of flesh, clouded with sin, we cannot know the glory of Christ, till we are freed from that darkness, by taking away the obstacles. We have still thick scales upon our eyes, and too much of the veil upon our hearts.

Paul that was ennobled with extraordinary revelations, yet pretended to no higher a knowledge of him, than as *in a glass*, and that not clearly but *darkly*, 1 Cor. 13. 12. The fuller knowledge is reserved for another life. We must know him here by his name, not by his face ; by his grace, not by his glory. Who can see so well with sore eyes, as when the organ is healed ? Christ looks *through the lattice*, Cant. 2. 9. Gives us an imperfect sight of himself. God keeps back much of the knowledge of himself, to humble us for our first curiosity in Adam our common root, and to whet our longings after another world, wherein we shall know Christ no more, by a stooping faith, but

an ascending vision ; when we shall, as it were, with Thomas, put our hands into his wounds. Yet a perfection in the knowledge of Christ, as well as in grace, must be aimed at in this life. So the apostle did, he *followed after, if he might apprehend, Phil. 3. 12* ; and all that are sincere, are thus minded. He did not apprehend all of Christ, but laboured still in enquiries after him, and took greater strides in his journey to him. Light of knowledge is sown here, but the harvest is above. We can never totally shake off our ignorance, till we surmount our natural corruption.

(4.) The knowledge of God and Christ which is saving, differs not from other knowledge in regard of the *object*, but the *manner* of knowing and the effects of knowledge. One knows by a natural understanding, and knows God in the scripture as he would know a thing written in any other book : the other knowledge is by an understanding opened to take in more fully what is presented. The shutters which barred out the light, are pulled down, whereby the light breaks into the room more clearly. Then opened he their understandings, *Luke 24. 45*. Two may behold the same picture, the object is the same ; but one having a more piercing eye, and exacter judgment, will better discern the lineaments and beauty of the work, which the other cannot perceive, though he views the same object. Suppose a beast that knows his master and the servants that gave him food, were changed into a man, and endued with a rational soul, he would have the same object of knowledge, but he would know them in another manner with an understanding given ; whereas he knew them before only by a customary light, a strength of imagination. And another kind of knowledge in the effects. A child of a year old may know his parents, his father, mother, and the servants ; but when he grows up, though there be no change of the object, yet there is in the effects of his knowledge. He knows them with more rational affections, with expressions of

duty. So the knowledge of God differs in a sound christian from the knowledge others have under the preaching of the gospel; he knows God and Christ in a clearer manner, with a spiritual eye, and brings forth affectionate and practical fruits of that knowledge.

Secondly. What this knowledge of God is *affirmatively*. The world pretends to know God, but Christ flatly denies it, and appeals to his Father for the truth of it in his last prayer; *The world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and those have known that thou hast sent me, John 17. 25.* That part of the world that Christ had preached to, and declared the message from his Father, knew not God, they heard the report of him, they could not but know the doctrine delivered, but they rejected it, refused the embracing of it, and therefore it was no knowledge of God. He that hath a true sense of God, cannot but love him, trust in him, humble himself before him, hope in him, resign up himself to him, and bless and praise him for his manifestation.

The difference therefore of this knowledge from any other, is, 1. In regard of the effects. 2. In regard of the manner of knowing.

I. In regard of the *effects*.

1. It is a *transforming* knowledge. Such a knowledge which necessarily includes a conformity to the object. There is an external manifestation of God in the gospel to the ear, an internal manifestation in the heart; the one is called a report, the other a revelation, *Isa. 53. 1*; the common privilege of the gospel is to be heard, the special to be manifested to the saints by a powerful operation in the heart; this mystery is *made manifest to his saints, to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you the hope of glory, Col. 1. 26, 27.* When Christ is made known in them the hope of glory, as well as to them. When the knowledge of God in his grace, and the history of Christ in his nature, offices,

and passion, is turned into an image and stamp, working the heart into its own form. Such a manifestation of God spiritually, as men have of God naturally; *That which may be known of God, is manifest in them, as well as shown to them, Rom. 1. 19*: showed to them in the creatures, manifest in their consciences; notions of God riveted, that cannot be blotted out, though resisted by flesh. In the saving knowledge, the notions of God in his gospel discovery, and of Christ in his mediation, are manifest in the heart; insinuating themselves secretly into the inward parts of the soul, and moulding the heart into the form of the evangelical doctrine. Such a revelation of God and Christ in a man, as changes the whole frame and model of counsels and counsellors, which before were followed, when Christ was revealed in him; he *conferred not with flesh and blood, Gal. 1. 16*.

The historical knowledge of Christ, is a knowledge of Christ in the purity and misery of his flesh; the other is a knowledge of Christ in the renewing of his spirit. The one is a knowledge of the truth as it is in the doctrine; the other a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; a transcribing the copy in the heart. The knowledge of the one, is like a man's sight of a star, he gazeth upon it, but is not turned into the image and sparkling beauty of that star; the other is like a man's knowledge of a virtuous person whose amiable endowments and carriage he admires, and from an admiration proceeds to imitation, and framing himself according to that pattern. When knowledge creates love, love delights to draw the picture of the beloved person.

(1.) This change is the proper end of this knowledge, therefore it cannot be a right knowledge, *till it attains the end*. As the end of the Israelites' looking upon the brazen serpent, was to be changed from wounded, to sound men; from dying to living: the end of the angel's moving the waters in the pool of Bethesda, was to enrich them with an healing virtue,

for the cure of bodily distempers ; the end of this motion was not attained, unless some cure were wrought. The forming of Christ in the head, changing the notions in the mind, is in order to a Christ formed in the heart, changing the inclinations of the will and the temper of the soul. A renewing in knowledge is in order to the renewing the image of God ; *Renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him, Col. 3. 10* ; removing the ignorance to remove the deformity. It is expressed by opening the eyes, but with such a virtue lodged by it in the heart, that attracts it from the devil to God ; *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, Acts 26. 18.*

The motion of the *will*, is the end of light in the understanding ; when the eye is opened to behold the truth, the next step is a change of false notions of God and religion to true ; after that, a conversion from Satan the prince of darkness, to God the Father of lights ; then follows justification, sanctification, and the completeness of happiness. Not only the beginning of this change, but the progress of it, till it arrive to perfection, depends upon our looking on Christ ; *With open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. 3. 18.* The glory of God and Christ are beheld and known in the glass of the gospel, and a divine beauty conveyed as was to Moses, in his converse with God, by a reflection of his beams ; just as the rising sun changeth the air into its own likeness, and transforms the world from the deformity of darkness to the beauty of light ; or colours laid upon canvass, assimilate it to the object whose picture it is. There is a reflection from the understanding to the will, whereby this change is wrought ; and it is by look after look, that it is perfected to a full resemblance, according to the degrees of spiritual knowledge.

When this knowledge is *enlightening*, it is the

image of God in the mind ; when it is enlivening, it is the image of God in the heart ; a picture of God and Christ, drawn in the understanding, which enamours the will, and assimilates the whole soul to God. The gospel is this glass ; which doth not only represent the object, but alters the complexion of the soul. This transformation is the end of the opening the eye, that the object may be viewed, and the heart changed thereby. As human knowledge is insignificant, unless it attain the end of knowledge ; so is divine, or the knowledge of God : the sublimest knowledge of God therefore, which centres not in this end, is to no purpose, unless to aggravate our sin, and sharpen our misery. This is not gained by a loose knowledge, as a man knows the sun by his beams ; but he hath not the image of the sun in the ball of his eye, unless he look upon the body of it.

(2.) The change of the soul to a perfect glory in heaven, depends upon *the perfect knowledge of God and Christ*. And therefore the change here depends upon this knowledge ; this knowledge therefore cannot be a right knowledge, without this which is the proper effect of it. The vision of Christ in his glorious state, shall then cause likeness to him ; *We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is*, 1 John 3. 2. We shall see him in his glory ; we shall, by that view, be transformed into the image of his glory, as by contemplating his virtues, we are here changed into the image of his grace. The devils and wicked men shall see him in his glory at his appearance, but not be happy by him ; because their knowledge of him does not change their infernal complexion. As it is an uncomfortable knowledge of him then, which does not change the soul into the image of his glory, so it is a miserable knowledge of him here that does not alter us into the image of his grace. The true knowledge of God works the same effects here, according to its degrees, as it will hereafter ; as a perfect sight will draw the clearest and fullest lineaments of God in the heart, so an imperfect knowledge of him here

must cause some shadows, and imperfect draughts of him in the soul. It is not else a knowledge of the right stamp.

(3.) Such an effect of the knowledge of Christ is therefore *necessary*. Every notion of God and Christ in the mind, must spring up into a new grace in the will, and be as a root of life in the heart; it will else be but as a feather in the cap, or flower in the hand, which will make a little show, and wither and leave no prints behind it but those of condemnation. That knowledge of God which is not beautified with grace, instead of making us amiable christians, will render us deformed devils.

Well then, consider; do we find grace conformable to our knowledge of God and Christ? Does the knowledge of God's holiness in Christ render our souls holy? Does the consideration of his majesty sink us into humility? Does the thoughts of his condescension lay the soul at his feet? Does the knowledge of his power subdue our pride, the knowledge of his love transform us into love and affection? Does grace in our hearts bud forth from the notions of our head? It is then such a knowledge of God as secures our happiness. Do we see Christ in the brightness of his divine nature, and the veil of his human, to admire his condescending kindness? Do we know him *travelling* to mount Calvary *in the greatness of his strength*, to spring up sorrow for our sins? Do we see him wrestling with devils, to pull the prey of precious souls out of their hands, to rest upon his power? Do we know him offering up to the justice of God, the full satisfaction of his blood, and paying the demanded debt to a farthing, to accept of him as a propitiation? Do we know him wielding a royal sceptre by the will of his Father, to obey his authority? Do we know him pierced, and know him raised? Know him on the cross, and on the throne? In the reproaches of men, and the glory of his Father? To be assimilated to him in the likeness of his death, and the quickening of his resurrec-

tion? It is then a living knowledge, such a knowledge as now buds and blossoms, and will ripen up to eternal life.

2. It is an *affective* knowledge. All saving knowledge is full of sense. The beams of truth in the mind, beget a kindly heat in the will. The understanding forms motives of fear and love of God, and offers them to the will to be pursued; the soul desires to know him more, that it may love him. Some therefore define divinity to be affective. * All men have some knowledge of God objectively, but it is not formally a divine knowledge, without the affections of love to him, and delight in him. This saving knowledge is a knowledge of a reality in God and Christ; another may have clearer notions, know truths in their connexions, but a christian knows with a more excellent knowledge, because more affective, with a heat as well as a light: what shines upon the head, kindles love in the heart.

Others have the same object of knowledge, but it appears not in that amiableness to them; there is a difference between a rational and spiritual knowledge, as there is between the Spirit, the Author of the one, and reason, the spring of the other. Natural knowledge lies sleeping in the head, without moving the affections; spiritual light cannot be without spiritual heat; *Their eyes were opened, and their hearts burned, Luke 24 31, 32*; the one hath light like that of a torch, the other influence, as well as light, like that of the sun. It is the property of light, not only to enlighten, but heat: some therefore make fire to be nothing else but condensed light, and light to be rarified fire. The true light of God is always accompanied with a flame of love, which clasps about the object.

The divine philosopher could say, that souls, first by a view, and then a love of the divine beauty, recover their wings and fly up to their heavenly

country. Have we therefore not only a light in our heads, but a warmth in our hearts? Not only a beam in our minds but a spark in our affections? It is then a saving knowledge of God. Both must go together, knowledge without affections is stupid, and affections without knowledge are childish. The diviner the light of the mind, the warmer will love be in the soul. The clearer and stronger the beams upon the wall, the stronger will be the reflexion. In knowledge we are passive in the reception of the divine beams, by affections we are active and give ourselves to God.

To prove this, consider that,

1. All the knowledge we have of God, is *insignificant* to happiness without suitable affections. God's end is not so much to be known by us, as to be loved by us, and the discovery of himself is in order to a return of affections from us. *He that loves me, shall be loved of my Father, John 14. 21*; not he that only knows me. We cannot suppose that in heaven the blessed are enriched with a greater light, but that they may be spirited with a greater love. Love and holiness are the perfection of the soul there, and contemplation but a means to bring in the heart to him. It is more glorious to love, than barely to know. Those that distinguish the orders of angels, place the seraphims above the cherubims, because they have a more ardent love, as well as the clearer knowledge. If we want love to others, the apostle accounts us ignorant of God, because God is love. *He that loves not, knows not God, for God is love, 1 John 4. 8.* Much more is he ignorant of God, that is empty of affection to him, who is more amiable than any creature. It is one thing to know God, and another to retain God in our knowledge; one may be said to know God, who can discourse rationally of God, as those philosophers could, *Rom. 1. 28*; but they retain God in their knowledge, that are inflamed with affection to him, and scorn all things in comparison of him. Though we may seem to have a clear know-

ledge, it cannot be thriving without this, nor continuing; when any thing is loved equally with him, there may soon be a forsaking of him. All the knowledge a natural man hath of God, is such a sight of the excellency of God, and Christ, and his truths, as a beast hath of a diamond; he seeth it sparkling, but knows not its real worth, and therefore has no satisfaction in it, nor affection to it.

(1.) Since the knowledge is transforming, it cannot be so without *affection*. Without knowledge of him, we can never affect him; and without affections we can never be like him. We are not changed into his image, till we behold his beauty so as to love and adore him. It is not only a beam of his loveliness, but a ray of his love, that changes the temper of the soul. * Though the light of the fire attends the heat of it, yet it is not the light, but the heat transforms combustible matter into fire. It was not Christ's knowledge of us, but love to us, stooped the divine nature to assume ours; nor our knowledge, but faith and love, that elevates us to the divine. As Christ is a Sun of righteousness, not only shining but warming; if we be like him, there must not only be light in our minds, but warmth in our affections.

(2.) It could be no better than the knowledge of a *devil*. If we had as high a knowledge of God as an angel hath, without the affections suitable to the angelical state, it would be our torment, not our happiness. This saving knowledge differs from the other, as the knowledge of angels does from that of devils. The light of their minds, hath sprung out into a constant affection ever since their creation, and could never see a spark in any thing else to draw them to any dislike of God. The devils have a knowledge of God, but are as much empty of affection to him as the angels are of any hatred of him. The knowledge of the good angels would be their torment as well as the knowledge of the devils, if they had not flames of

* Fatal Doom, or Charms of Divine Love, page 9. changed.

love, as well as beams of light. That only is true knowledge that acts us to a conjunction with God.

(3.) The knowledge of any object is to little purpose *without a suitable affection*. As a man hath not a right knowledge of sin, unless he feel the dreadful weight of it, so as to loathe it; *Then shall you remember your own evil ways, and shall loathe yourselves for your iniquity, Ezek. 36. 31*; nor a right knowledge of the word, unless he believes it; nor a right apprehension of the world, unless he counts it contemptible; so no man knows God aright, unless his heart be set upon him, according to the worth of the object known, and the savour of the ointments of Christ. It is impossible a man can have an intellectual spiritual view of God, but he must see him amiable and worthy of his choicest affections; and he cannot be so injurious to himself, and his own sentiments, as not to give his own apprehensions their due, by giving God's amiableness his.

He cannot be said therefore to have any sound apprehension of God who hath not a choice affection to him, and delight in him. He that does not praise the skill of an artist in his workmanship, discovers either his ignorance or his envy. As a faith without works, hath no better title from the apostle than a *dead faith, James 2. 20*; so a knowledge without love, is no better than a dead stupid knowledge; a knowledge buried in the grave of earthly affections. No man can be so stripped of affection to himself, as to neglect that good which he does really know. No man can imagine that another apprehends that as excellent, with which there is not a full closure of his affections. If Moses had not slighted *the treasures of Egypt for the reproof of Christ*, he had not testified any true knowledge and esteem of him, *Heb. 11. 26*.

Well then, can that man be said to know God to be clothed with majesty, before whom angels cover their faces, and mountains tremble, who hath no fear to offend him? Does he know God to be a con-

suming fire, and himself but stubble, that hath no dread of God? Does he know the mercy of God, who hath no care to please him, but presumes upon his goodness? Can he be said to know God's holiness, that hath no sense of his own uncleanness? Does' that man know Christ to be a blessed Redeemer, who does not fall at his feet? Does he know him groaning upon the cross for sin, and bruised for it, who lets that sin live with welcome in his soul, which grieved and bruised him? If knowledge in the head does not work spiritual affections in the heart, it can never be put upon the account of a saving knowledge, it is not really knowledge, but only a pretence to it.

Without affection we answer not *the end* of the knowledge of God. The revelation of God is made to us for our imitation, he is discovered as the chiefest good and the exactest pattern. The sum of the law consists in love, and the end of the gospel manifestation is to engage our love. Christ is not represented only as a dying man, but as God-man dying for the sins of the world, suffering in our stead, and therefore to raise our affections, not to content our curiosity. Faith and love must be united, 1 *Tim.* 1.

14. The gospel which is a representation of God in Christ, is said to be worthy, not of observation but of *acceptation*, ver. 15, and worthy of observation in order to acceptation. The knowledge of a law is to raise a love to it, *Psal.* 119. 97, the knowledge of the law-giver ought not to do less. As we know not righteousness till the law be in our hearts, as the prophet says, *Ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law, Isa.* 51. 7; so we know not God till he be in our affections.

3. Our knowledge of God ought to be *conformable* to his knowledge of us. God's knowledge of his people is attended with affection. He is not said in scripture language to know unless he love; *You only have I known of all the families of the earth, Amos* 3 2. There is a great difference between God's

knowledge of omniscience, and his knowledge of affection : with the first he knows all creatures, with the other his people ; as God is not said to know us without testimonies of his affection to us, so we cannot be said to know God without emotions of affection to him.

4. Application of ourselves to the knowledge of God without affection, is not agreeable to *the nature of our souls*. The choice of the will in all true knowledge treads upon the heel of the act of the understanding, and men naturally desire the knowledge of that which is true, in order to the enjoyment of that which is good in it. The end of all the acts of the understanding, is to cause a motion in the will, and affections suitable to the apprehension. God hath given us two faculties, understanding, to know the goodness of a thing, and a will to embrace it. To content one faculty in contemplation, without contenting the other in embracing what we know, is to give a half satisfaction to the soul. It is to separate those two faculties of understanding and will which God hath joined. Knowledge is the glory of the mind both in this and the other world, the object of that is truth ; but there is another faculty which must have its perfection, that is the will, the object whereof is good, and the content of that faculty lies in embracing the good apprehended both in this life and the next. This therefore must be gratified as well as the other, and each faculty must have a full rest in a due object ; the soul else cannot have an intire satisfaction according to the latitude and capaciousness of its nature.

Therefore all abstracted notions of God, without an influence upon the will, are barren, and not agreeable and satisfactory to the nature of the soul. It cannot be satisfied with contemplation without fruition, and such an intimate fruition as may affect the whole nature. Now to have this enjoyment, is not only to know God or think of him, but to embrace him by love, to clasp about God with spiritual affections, to

receive the touches of his goodness every moment. To give the soul a full satisfaction according to the nature of it, is to have a stamp of the nature of God upon our understanding, and a stamp of the goodness of God upon our wills.

5. Without affection, our knowledge of God may have and will have *base and corrupt ends*. And therefore our knowledge cannot be saving without it. Men may desire to know out of a natural itch, the relics of Adam, or out of a desire to enlarge the perfection of their understanding, (as the knowledge of philosophers tended chiefly to such an end) and may have no higher aims in endeavouring after the knowledge of God than endeavouring after the knowledge of other things either natural or moral. Perhaps this affecting the knowledge of God may arise from pride, and ambition, and a desire of being esteemed eminent in intellectuals and discourse, may make the pulse of their affections beat strongly to this knowledge, it being natural to men to be displeased more with being counted fools, than being counted vicious, and to have more natural desires after knowledge than after virtue, even as Adam had. Nay, men may desire to know God and the truths of God as a means of sensual gratification, and to foment some carnal design, as gain, which may be promoted by religious discourses.

But certainly much of the knowledge of God which is pretended among us, though it may arise out of an affection to knowledge, yet may be without an affection to the object of it. As there is a knowledge of God when there is not a *glorifying of him as God*, *Rom. 1. 21*; so there may be a desire to know God, without any desire to glorify him. As a man may desire to know sin, to see a man when he is drunk, and to observe his carriage, not out of any design he hath to loathe that sin, but to make his observations upon the carriage and disposition of the person while he is under the power of that filthy act, which is but to satisfy his curiosity. Or he may desire to see a

man in the exercise of some virtue out of the same end, not out of a desire to conform himself to that pattern. So a man may desire to know God, and Christ, and the truths of Christ, not with any intent to have his affections with an exact harmony centre in them, but to satisfy that natural thirst which he hath for knowledge.

And a man may have a great delight in this knowledge of God, as they did *delight to know God's ways, and delight in approaching to him, Isa. 58. 2*, but, as their fasts were, *only for strife and debate*, ver. 4. And that delight may arise from a delight in the excellency of the object, as a man delights to contemplate the nature of the sun and stars more than the nature of a clod of earth, yet cannot be said to love them, but love his own act of contemplation and knowledge of them. Many thus know God, and are inquisitive after the knowledge of him, as a curious object of knowledge, not as a spiritual object of love and delight, to bestow the flower of their affections upon. Such often miss of their intent, God obscures himself when he is searched after with such curiosity. And such a knowledge will end in apostacy, as it began in corruption; the man will return as a dog to his vomit, or a swine to wallow in the mire, as those did who had escaped the pollutions of the world *through the knowledge of Christ, 2 Pet. 2. 20, 21, 22*. Which knowledge they probably affected out of curiosity, because of the novelty of it, the noise it made in the world, or some bye end, which made them cast it off when it ceased to serve their purpose, and so at last count Christ and his cross foolishness.

Well then,

Try your knowledge of God *by your affections to him*. What strong desires are there for the enjoyment of God and Christ, what delight in approaches to him, what propensities of the heart in spiritual duties? Do they spring from affection, or move by the

fears and upbraidings of conscience? Does the knowledge of Christ in his mediation, natures, offices, as the only remedy for our lost souls, kindle desires, holy affections, inexpressible heart-breakings for him? as we find David's heart often ascending to God under such influence. Is there a love to God rising out of a sense of his love to lost man? God cannot be known an infinite and abounded and outflowing goodness, without a flight of our affections to him. It is as impossible that a good spiritually known should not be beloved, as that any good should be beloved that is not known. Every common witness of God in the works of creation *fills the heart with gladness*, *Acts 14. 16, 17*, much more every spiritual witness of God in the work of redemption apprehended by the soul. If created excellency insinuates itself into our affections, the super-eminent beauty of God must much more, when he is seen and known. The spiritual light which comes from God is for God. In other knowledge self-love poises the heart, but a saving knowledge conducts the heart to an admiration of God and affection to him. In heaven a clear vision renders the beholder full of the most glowing affections: the angels always behold the face of God, *Matt. 18. 10*. Always, as not counting any thing else worthy of a glance, but in obedience to his order. Nothing can be called a saving knowledge of God, which does not rank all our affections in order to the object of it.

3. It is an *active and expressive* knowledge. It expresses in the life what is in the head and heart; a change in the heart engenders affection, and affection will break out in action; love will lay a constraint upon the heart. We commonly say of a notoriously profane man, though he may have excellent parts, and a great stock of knowledge, that he is a sot, because his knowledge is not operative in ways agreeable to it, he acts like the most ignorant person. He cannot be said to know God to be holy, and the gospel to be a doctrine according to godliness, who hath

not a practice according to the rules of godliness. To be sensual is to have nothing of the Spirit, *Jude* 19. He hath nothing of the light of the Spirit who is under the conduct of a corrupted sense. And the apostle intimates it plainly, that unless men *awake to righteousness*, and avoid sin, they *have not the knowledge of God*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 34. A bed-rid knowledge it is without affection proper for it, rather the torment than ornament of the soul. All knowledge without an imitation of God, is but a stupid sleepy notion : We have then a *full assurance of knowledge*, when we are *followers of God*, 1 *Thess.* 1. 5, 6.

The first principle which is taught by the manifestation of God is to deny ungodliness ; *The grace of God teacheth us to deny ungodliness*, *Tit.* 2. 12, 13. As God's knowing us is not a simple view but a provident care, so our knowledge of God is not a simple speculation, but a divine operation of the soul as well as in the soul. If *he that commits sin, hath not known God*, 1 *John* 3. 6 ; then he that hath known God, doth not commit sin. He flatters not himself in any, arms himself against all, commenceth an irreconcilable war against the lighter troops as well as the main body, and stands upon his guard to prevent every invasion. He that knows Christ, knows that he is worthy of all his service, since he, and none but he, was crucified for him. He that knows God, knows the necessity of enjoying him, and will therefore be guided in those ways which tend to the enjoyment of him. If a man knows a medicine to be excellent for the cure of such a disease which he labours under, and is sensible of the necessity of it, he will certainly apply it. As Christ discovered the knowledge of God in the world to dissolve the works of the devil in the world, so when the knowledge of Christ shines in the heart, it dissolves the works of darkness and lust in the soul, for it discovers right notions of sin and vanity, and he that hath right notions of it, cannot affect it.

When Noah knew God in his threatening justice, he obeys God in the building an ark. When Abraham knew God in the mercy and truth of his promise, he obeys God in offering his Isaac ; the one's knowledge wrought against the reproaches of an unbelieving world, and the other's against the tide of a natural affection. So powerful is this divine knowledge where it seizes upon the heart, to bring forth the fruits of fear and holiness. Let none of us therefore flatter ourselves that we have a saving knowledge of God without imitation of him, that we understand Christ to be a sufficient Saviour without relying on him. It is a knowledge in the form, and an ignorance in the power. Without an evangelical obedience, a professing christian knows no more savingly than a moral heathen, because he acts no better than such an one.

(1.) This knowledge is *life*. *It is the light of life*, *John* 8. 12, an active lively light, by an hebraism. All lucid bodies in the heavens are active in their own nature, and direct men in their several spheres of activity in the world. When the sun rises, men rise to their daily task ; when the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shines forth in the face of Christ in the heart, there is a resurrection to vital actions. *It is a well-spring of life unto him that hath it*, *Prov.* 16. 22. If it hath a vitality in it to convey life, it must needs rise up in excellent operations according to the measure of it. Unless we can suppose, that a divine principle in the mind should produce nothing else but a dead sleep in all the other parts of the soul. Life it is, and life is not without activity ; eternal life it is, and that cannot be without a succession of vital acts to eternity.

(2.) The end of knowledge is not attained without *actions suitable to it*. If we have been *taught by him as the truth is in Jesus*, there is a stripping off the rags of the old Adam, a change of the former conversation which was according to deceitful lusts ; *But you have not so learned Christ*, *Eph.* 4. 21, 22. As

the word is an engrafted word, so the knowledge of God, is an engrafted knowledge, which is inserted in the stock to change the nature of it into that of the graft, and causing the production of fruits from it according to the nature of the slip joined with it. The scripture, which is a discovery of God, is not only a history, but a rule. God declares himself as our Lord and as our pattern; Christ is manifested as an image of conformity as well as a propitiatory offering. Where he is known as a propitiation for our comfort, he is known as a pattern for our comfort.

The end of knowledge is to impress a sound image of the goodness of an object as well as the truth; the truth to be eyed, and the goodness to be imitated. * Distinct conceptions of God, and rational discourses of Christ, glorify him no more than a painter does the party whose picture he hath drawn. The glory of God consists not in a lifeless notion of him but an active resemblance of him. A natural man may have some pleasure in knowing the nature of God, but he cares not for knowing the ways of God; *We desire not the knowledge of thy ways, Job 21. 14*; he would know him to be merciful, but not know him to be holy: he is opposite to the truths of God, because they are repugnant to the delights and interests of the flesh. The Scotists defined divinity well when they made it *practica*, better than Aquinas who made it *speculativa*; every illumination of the mind is not to speculate, but to work by; every notion of God is a direction to some sphere of action. The end of Christ's knowledge of his Father must be the end of our knowledge both of God and himself: he knows his Father's secrets to reveal them, and he knows his Father's will to perform it.

As we are to pray that we may do the will of God as the angels do, so we are to know that we may do the will of God as the angels do it. The incarnation of Christ was for action, the divine nature had not

* Jackson, vol. 3. quar. cap. 8. p. 129.

attained its end in the business of our redemption without union to the human, as necessary to mediatory acts ; nor doth our knowledge of God attain its end without union to the will, as necessary to all religious operations. The knowledge of Christ is like the former prophecies of Christ, which would not have had their effect without his incarnation ; nor hath knowledge its effect without (so to speak) an incarnation of it in our conversation. The end of knowledge is directive ; the proper effect of knowledge is the observation of the direction, to write after the copy, to work according to the pattern, to do what is agreeable to the perfections of God, to honour what we see honourable in God, and to disparage none of those excellencies we profess to know.

(3.) All the knowledge of God and Christ without actions correspondent thereunto, is no better in the account of God than *ignorance*, unless it be accidentally to *condemnation*. Without obedience we are truly ignorant, though our speculations may be as sublime as those of devils ; *He that saith he knows him and keeps not his commandments, is a liar*, 1 John 2. 4. The true knowledge of God does not only glitter in the understanding, or glimmer in a profession, but beams out in a vigorous conversation, acting all things agreeable to the will of God. That knowledge of God which does not take root in the heart, and grow up into life and spirit, is ignorance in the account of God ; those Gentiles, *Rom.* 1. 21, that are said to *know God*, are said *not to know him*, ver. 28 ; they knew him as rational men, not as obedient men ; they had a notion of him without any affection to his service, they had high speculations of his excellency, but nothing of his perfections and his law writ in the tables of their hearts. Such a knowledge as geometers may have by understanding the rules of a science, not such a knowledge as an artificer may have by the practice of those rules. No doubt but Eli's sons had a knowledge of God and his law by education, but because it did not prevail in their

conversation, they are said *not to know the Lord*, 1 Sam. 2. 12; not to know God, and not to obey him are one and the same thing in the account of God in the day of judgment, 2 Thes. 1. 8, and it is called ignorance, because men with that knowledge act as if they were wholly ignorant of the nature and will of God. They behave themselves, as men that never heard of God or Christ would be expected to do. They may be christians in knowledge, and pagans in life. True reason in every thing naturally tends to practice. He is of no use in society or common wealth, who is swallowed up in contemplations, and launches not out into a useful activity. An idle knowledge is of no use for God, and the end of a man's creation. It is but a pretence, a mere puff of a fleshly mind.

There is as much difference between such a dormant knowledge, and that which rises up in sprightly motions for God, as between the sun in a statue bravely gilded, and that in the firmament dispersing his influences into all the corners of the world, and honouring his Creator by his daily race. We no more know any truth of God unless we digest it, than a man knows the virtue of bread, unless he concocts it, and feels the strength of it in his limbs. Practice is the evidence of knowledge; it cannot be rationally concluded that he knows God to be omnipresent, who neglects the duty in secret required of him; or apprehends him to be just, who in a course of sin denies it, and presumes upon his mercy. God puts an emphasis upon Josiah's obedience, as an evidence of his knowledge, *He judged the cause of the poor and needy, was not this to know me? saith the Lord*, Jer. 22. 16. More than ever God said of Solomon, who had his mind better filled, and his heart more empty. Solomon could discourse excellently of the nature of God, and charm men with his wisdom; but God never said of that, *was not this to know me?* Other knowledge may make us admired among men, this only makes us acceptable to God.

(4.) The *least saving* knowledge of God is of an

active nature. The wise men had but a spark by the discovery of a star, and that put them upon seeking the King of the Jews, *Mat.* 2. 1, 2 ; the least star in the heavens, though it hath not so much light as another, has its influences and regular motions. Another may discourse better of the nature of God, speak distinctly of the glory of his attributes and works, discourse of the nature of sin, give an hundred reasons against it, yet obey not that God he speaks of, and be a slave to that sin he disputes against ; whereas he that hath the least spark of the spiritual knowledge of God and Christ, walks more according to the nature of God, and demeans himself with more honour to the perfections of God in his life, than the greatest advocate for him can with his tongue. He is continually enquiring what purity, fear, love, dependence, obedience, grief, and joy, the holiness, majesty, goodness, mercy, faithfulness, power, and righteousness of God, calls for at his hands. Such an one hath a martyr's knowledge ; is content to part with any thing, with all, for the glory of that God he knows ; the other that hath a flourishing wit, a loose unrooted, floating knowledge, would not part with the least drop of blood, for the honour of that God he pretends to know ; he would cast all the knowledge of God and Christ behind him, rather than part with any thing for him, when Christ and his life come to a contest. But the least grain of the saving knowledge of God, renders a man an habitual martyr.

Well then, try your knowledge of God by this. As sin is not known, unless it cause grief in the heart, so God is not known, unless the knowledge of him quicken an obedience to him. Where this spiritual knowledge of God is implanted, and the sweetness of Christ experienced, there will be delight in those services which are well-pleasing to him ; a joy in all motives to him, and a swiftness in all motions for him ; a delight both in the service itself, and the object of it.

PART V.

DISCUSSION OF THE EFFECTS OF KNOWLEDGE
CONTINUED,

It is humbling knowledge—Scatters mental darkness—Comes from God—They who have most knowledge, are most humble—Makes its subjects humble and meek among men—It is a weaning knowledge—Fiducial knowledge—Essential value of it—Faith increases with knowledge—It is progressive—An active principle—In what respects knowledge is progressive—The manner of knowing God—It is saving and distinct—Certain—A firm knowledge—Inexpressible.

4. **I**T is an *humbling, self-abasing* knowledge.

(1.) It humbleth us *before God*. * To know God without knowing ourselves, is a fruitless speculation ; the knowledge of ourselves and our own misery, without the knowledge of God and his mercy, is a miserable vexation. The end of it is to pay God a glory due to him from his creature. Pride debases the Deity, and snatches the crown of glory from God, to set it, upon the creature's head ; but this saving knowledge sinks man to the dust without sinking him to hell ; lays him flat on the earth, thereby to raise him to heaven. True knowledge, and a melting heart,

* Dr. Preston.

are inseparable companions ; Christ joins hardness and ignorance together, *Mark* 8. 17. It is the nature of other knowledge to *puff up*, *1 Cor.* 8. 1, of this to pull down. The plumes of a proud spirit fall at the appearance of God. He regards himself as a worm, when he understands the excellency of his Creator. Without it, it is but a knowledge in conceit, not in reality, he *knows nothing* of God, though he thinks he does, *1 Cor.* 8. 2.

Manasseh had some knowledge of God no question, by the religious education of his father Hezekiah ; but it went not for current coin in heaven, till he was in an humbled frame ; *Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God*, *2 Chron.* 33. 12, 13. It is not a knowledge of God, till it make man shrink into a sense of his own baseness and nothingness. A bare dogmatical knowledge of God, advanceth man without a proportionable advancement of God. It is of the same nature with other knowledge ; that which comes from our own reason is our fondling, it brings forth the fruits of old Adam ; that which is dropped in by the Spirit, brings forth the fruits of the Spirit, renders a man sensibly obliged, not to his own wit but God's grace. * A rational revelation rather hardens the heart than melts it, as a rational conviction is light without heat. Other knowledge discovers other things, but not a man's self : like a dark lanthorn which shows us other persons and things, but obscures ourselves from the sight of ourselves ; but the knowledge of God is such a light, whereby a man beholds himself as well as the way wherein he is to walk.

[1.] It is such a knowledge as *scatters the mist* that is upon the heart, and thereby discovers its impurity.

The first beam shot into the heart by the Spirit, darts to the very centre, and discovers the nest of evil and poison. As the beam is shot from God, it reveals his beauty, as shedding its light upon the soul, it reveals its deformity. As the beam from the sun

* Strong.

that conquers the darkness of the night, discovers the glory of the sun, and the filth of a dunghill, at the same time. The sensible discovery of the holiness of God, and the sufferings of Christ in the very act, opens the sinfulness of sin. The majesty of God shows him his vileness, the purity of God his filthiness, the justice of God his demerit, and the power of God his impotence. If the soul knows God in his glory, it sinks down with Isaiah at the very first ray of it, in a sense of its undone condition ; *Woe is me, for I am undone*, Isa. 6. 1, 5, נרמתי I was silent. Symm *ἰσώπησα*, as if he had attempted to join with the angels in the praise of God at the sight of him, but was struck down with a sense of his own unworthiness ; *I am a man of polluted lips*, i. e. I am not worthy to praise God ; *so powerful was one ray to affect his soul with a sense of his sin, and his miserable estate by it, and stripped him of all conceits of self-worth.

When the soul hears God in the law, it trembles at the thunder. When it sees Christ bowing upon the cross, it cannot but bow down under a sense of that iniquity which caused it. To know Christ savingly in the first glance, is to know ourselves to be children of wrath, under the curse of the law, and liable to the justice of God. To know Christ as a Mediator, implies our distance from God ; to know him as reconciler, our enmity ; to know him as Redeemer, our slavery ; to know him as a prophet, our ignorance ; as a priest, our guilt and weakness ; as an advocate, our inability to manage our own cause. Every notion of Christ, is a light that opens our eyes to advance faith in God, and humility in ourselves. Every rule is *index sui & obliqui*, it shows its own straightness, and the crookedness of any thing applied to it. All the glory of the stars, as well as the darkness of the night, disappears at the rising of the sun : at the shedding of this beam upon the heart, the natural glory of a man's own righteousness is obscured, as well as his guilt and his loathsomeness manifested. When the

elders saw God in his glory, *they fell upon their faces*, Rev. 4. 10. When John Baptist saw Christ, he was sensible of his own filthiness, and need of washing; *I have need to be baptized of thee*, Matt. 3. 14. An expression not used before by him to any of the multitude. How is a soul, at the first breaking out of this light upon him, humbled at the consideration of his unworthy thoughts of God, unsuitable to the notions he is now possessed with? How does he distaste his own temper, to be so little affected with God, so transcendently worthy of his highest love? O my soul, why wert thou so base, so vile in thy apprehensions and pursuits, as to cast thyself down to adore such despicable objects as sin and vanity?

[2.] It is a knowledge that *comes from God*, and therefore must needs humble. It is a beam from him; it is not therefore to nourish that pride in the creature, which he punished upon the Fall with so long a chain of miseries. It is *he teacheth the meek his ways*, Psa. 25. 9, he makes sinners meek by his teaching, and when they are meek, they are subjects capable of more knowledge, and instructions from him. If the meek are the subjects of clearer teachings, the effect of this discovery is not to exalt their pride, but enlarge their humility. Pride cannot naturally flow from any thing that is divine. It is none of God's offspring, but the production of Satan. God, who hath set us a pattern of humility in his own condescension, and set us an example of humility in the person of his Son, can never be the Father of that which is so contrary to all his designs in the world.

[3.] The knowledge of God is always attended with a *comparison* of the soul with him, if it be saving: there cannot but be some reflexion. The angels in their knowledge of Christ as their confirmer, cannot but reflect with humility upon their mutable state by nature, which might have rendered them by their own folly as sinful and miserable as devils, without the grace of God, and their confirmation in a

happy state by the Son of God. So in the knowledge of God's excellency, the soul cannot but reflect upon its unsuitableness to God. It sees God, and falls out with itself. It loves God, and is angry with itself. It beholds God, and looks upon itself with disdain. Peter could not receive a look from his Master without reflecting upon his unworthy carriage, and melting into tears. When a man looks upon the earth, and the things upon it, he is apt to believe he hath an acute eye ; but when he looks upon the sun, and finds himself confounded by the brightness of its light, he is sensible of the dulness of his eye in comparison of that lustre which glared upon it.

So when we fix our eyes upon ourselves, and dwell upon the thoughts of any excellency, righteousness, or virtue in us, we turn self-flatterers, and are apt to imagine that we are some great thing, above the sphere of common nature, and the insects of mankind : but when we turn our eyes towards heaven, and take a prospect of the holiness, wisdom, righteousness of God, which ought to be our copy to write after, our pride is dashed out of countenance, our holiness appears sordid, our righteousness matter of shame, our virtue feeble, our wisdom folly, our actions madness, and all our excellency a mere senseless shadow. We are then humbled not only for our sins, but our services, when we find those duties we are apt to boast of, bear no proportion to the holiness of God.

When Paul knew Christ, he was not only humble in himself, but rejected all confidence in the religious props he rested on before, *Phil.* 3. 8. He then beheld himself a dead man, and his services dead services, when he understood the righteousness of God manifested in a crucified and raised Christ. One spark of the divinity of Christ in a miracle, brought Peter upon his knees with a self-reflexion ; *Lord, depart from me, for I am a sinful man, Luke* 5. 8. It will make men humble for the sin of others. If we know God spiritually to be great, excellent, holy, we

cannot but with grief behold the sons of men so careless of his honour, and travailing with a birth of perpetual injuries against so excellent a majesty ; when we compare his nature with their practices, and reflect how little he hath deserved such carriages, and how much he hath deserved the contrary. The angels having the most glittering heads, have also the most affectionate hearts to the glory of that majesty which they adore, and therefore they rejoice at the conversion of a sinner ; by the same reason they have, if not their grief, yet their indignation, at the abuses God suffers in the world by wicked men, when they make this judicious comparison.

[4.] The *more knowledge* any have ever had of God, the *more humble* they have been. When Peter grew in the apprehensions of the ends of the death of Christ, he had no more those aspiring thoughts to think himself fit to reprove his Master, as when he had the first revelation of him to be the Son of God, *Mark* 8. 29, 32. *Matt.* 16. 13. Young scholars are most proud. * Duarenus used to say, those that come to the university, the first year are doctors in their own conceits ; the second year licentiates, and the third year students and learners. Not an apostle outstript Paul in the knowledge of God and Christ, nor came up to an equal measure with him ; nor did any equal him in his humility, who sets himself upon record to the world as the least of saints and the chiefest of sinners. Christ, who lay in the bosom of his Father, became a worm rather than a man, in making himself *of no reputation*, *Phil.* 2. 7. In conformity to him, the more clear the revelations of God are to our souls, the more voluntary disannulments there are of ourselves. The angels, that have the nearest approach to the Deity, and the richest prospect of his glory, cover their faces with an awe of his majesty, as if they did acknowledge the imperfection of their understandings, that they are not more

* Walaens de Sabbat. Orat. in fine 2. p. 225.

knowing; and cover their feet too, which are the affections of spiritual beings; as if they were ashamed that their love, delight, and zeal were not more glowing.

A great stock of natural knowledge debases a man in his own eyes, because he apprehends his own weakness to get to the top of that mountain he would reach by his enquiries. Socrates, who was the most knowing man of his age, was sensible that he knew nothing, because the more a man knows, the more he finds his own ignorance, and his inability to shake it off; and that the things he is ignorant of, are more than those which he seems to grasp in his understanding: much more does a spiritual christian see, that what he knows of God and Christ, is inconceivably less than what he is ignorant of. The more he knows of those objects, the more he knows his own defects, and his want of conformity to them. Agur was one of the wisest men of his age, whether he was Solomon, or some other in the time of Solomon, (which is more probable) yet counts himself void of wisdom, *more brutish than any man*, and not having *the understanding of a man*, as if he were not so wise and knowing as the vulgar sort, as well as inferior to the more raised sort of mankind, as the words *אדם איש* signify, *Prov.* 30. 2, 3, and he speaks it in reference to the knowledge he had of God, as appears by ver. 4. The more any man sees of God, the lower he falls in his own eyes.

(2.) As this knowledge of God makes us more humble before God, so it makes us more *humble and meek to men*. This was promised as a fruit of the knowledge of God in the gospel. It was this should turn ravenous wolves into gentle lambs, and render their natures as meek as before they were cruel; *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the cow and the bear shall feed together, their young ones shall lie down together, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord,* *Isaiah* 11. 6, 7, 8, 9. It is such a knowledge as

quells the pride of man, and the injustice and oppressions and furies engendered by that fruitful principle. The names whereby they are denominated, are names of meekness, lambs, kids, calves. Cruelty should grow mild, and inflexible tempers melt, ravenous dispositions be laid aside, the nature of man towards God, and the nature of man towards his neighbour, be changed. The knowledge of Christ in the gospel, pulls up such base affections by the roots, which would else grow in an ignorant untilled heart, as weeds in an uncultivated soil.

If men therefore are ready to fall foul upon one another upon every occasion, they have not advanced many steps in the knowledge of God. For this temper of humility is one effect of this divine light, it being rendered by the prophet, as the cause of such a miraculous change: where there is not therefore such a visible effect, there is nothing of the cause. The knowledge of the Lord can no more be in the soul without humility, than the sun can be in the heavens without dispersing its light on the earth; nor the enlightening Spirit without *meekness*, a fruit of it, *Gal. 5. 22*. Wisdom changes *the boldness of the face*, *Eccl. 8. 1*, and spreads a modesty in the soul; he is thereby less apt to censure others, and more sparing in his judging his brother.

God hath a perfect knowledge of himself, and is the highest pattern of humility: *He humbles himself to behold the things done in heaven and in earth. Psal. 113. 6*; much more is it his humiliation to solicit sinners, to bear patiently their affronts. None knew the Father but the Son, who humbled himself to the flesh of man, and to death for him. The angels also that excel in knowledge, as standing before the face of God, excel also in condescending to minister to men, who are more above the greatest man in the dignity of their nature, than the greatest man upon the earth can be above the meanest person by his education and dignity.

Well then, if this be an humbling knowledge, let us try ourselves by it, whether we are arrived to it or no. He that hath not a melting heart, hath not been under the shinings of this sun. The darkness of pride will be scattered by the strength and vigour of this light. The saving knowledge of God and Christ crucified lays a man flat on the ground; and the knowledge of God reconciled, and Christ risen, both humbles and revives. A proud divine knowledge is as great a contradiction, as to say, an humble diabolical malice.

(5.) It is a *weaning* knowledge. It weans a man's heart from all things below. Clear manifestations of God elevate the soul to God, when ignorance of him depresses the heart to one creature or other. The excellency of God dims the beauty of the creature, and the true knowledge of this excellency sets the creature below God in the heart. It leaves no room for any thing else, as the eye that hath gazed upon the sun admits not presently any other image into it. This divine knowledge disparages the value of any thing else, it represents sin vile, and the world empty. It is such an inestimable treasure that is not to be put in the balance with any thing else. All other things which carnal men esteem, are but thin and airy notions to this knowledge; every thing that hath a tincture of flesh and blood, human principles, fleshly councils, expire, when this wisdom shines in upon the soul. *I consulted not with flesh and blood, Gal. 1. 16*: nor can any man that hath found this mine of gold, leave it for a mite of brass.

When Christ and his sweetness is discerned and tasted, life is a torment, death a pleasure. Simeon upon his sight of Christ desires to depart, since *his eyes had seen God's salvation, Luke 2. 29, 30*. Nothing in the world could be worth his desires after a sight of the Redeemer. And Paul, who both had, and valued the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, esteems every thing in the world no better than dung,

and longs to be dissolved that he might be in his arms, *Phil.* 3. 8, and 1. 23. As when the sun appears in the heavens, it does not only discover itself, but discloses all things on the earth, so when God manifests himself to the soul, he does not only give the knowledge of himself, but shows to us the true nature of other things, that they can bear no proportion to the excellency of God and Christ, and bestow such a judgment and understanding upon us, that we look upon things under other notions and considerations than before we did; as men have other apprehensions of things in the light, than they had in the darkness of the night. He does not know God, that does not apprehend him to be more excellent than the withering flowers of any creature whatsoever; as he does not love Christ that loves him not above all creatures, and he does not worship God who worships the creature equally with him,* so he does not know God, that knows him not to be excellent above all creatures, and esteems him accordingly.

6. It is a *fiducial* knowledge. A knowledge of faith: *They that know thy name will trust in thee, Psal.* 9. 10; faith and trust are the concomitants of this knowledge. Such will address to God in all their straits, and rely upon his truth and goodness. And the *spirit of wisdom* is joined with *the acknowledgment of Christ*, *Eph.* 1. 17. Faith is principally meant by knowledge in scripture, some therefore interpret the knowledge of Christ, which is *eternal life*, in the text, to be faith. No knowledge indeed without faith, can be eternal life; and by knowledge must be understood a believing knowledge. All that have a general knowledge of Christ, though never so high, are not justified, for that excellent state the scripture ascribes only to faith. *By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, Isa.* 53. 11. *His knowledge*, objectively,

* Rom. 1. 25, *παρὰ κτίοντα*, worshipped the creature, juxta creatorem.

the knowledge of him, faith in him ; and faith is called knowledge, because it is radically in the understanding as liberty is, but it is formally in the will. Not that the understanding is the proper and sole seat of faith, because faith is *fiducia*, trust or reliance, which is not an act of the mind but of the will.

But faith is in the understanding in regard of disposition, but in the will in regard of the fiducial apprehension : * for faith is not one simple virtue, but compounded of two, knowledge and trust : the common subject is the heart, the special seat of each part is the understanding and will, (yet those two parts cannot be separated, but the nature of faith is destroyed) as original righteousness was both in the mind and the will ; and the happiness of heaven, which is but one entire happiness, consists both in the acts of the understanding in contemplation, and the acts of the will in the embracing the contemplated object. But by knowledge or sight in scripture is principally meant faith.

Abraham *saw* the day of Christ, *John* 8. 56, and with such a sight as sprung up in joy ; he saw it in the promise ; he knew it by way of energy in the propitiation of Christ and virtue of his Spirit ; he had the power of Christ's death in the mortification of his unbelief, before the death was felt by the Son of God upon the cross, and rose to a new life by the virtue of Christ's resurrection, before Christ laid his head in the grave. It was certainly a sight of faith ; for the Jews, to whom Christ spake this, saw him with their bodily eyes, beheld his day, they saw him personally face to face, and knew him in the flesh, yet were wholly ignorant both of the excellency of his person and virtue of his offices. It is one thing to know the nature of God, and another thing to know God in covenant as our God. Of the Sidonians God said *They shall know that I am the Lord, Ezek.* 28. 22.

* Rivet, in 53. *Isa.* 11.

In a way of justice, they shall know that I am of a righteous nature. But of his people Israel he saith, *They shall know that I am the Lord their God*, ver. 26. A God in covenant with them, in whom they have an interest. It is an interested knowledge. A relying upon God in his covenant as their's, according as the scripture propounds him.

There is as great a difference between the common knowledge of God in an unbelieving scholar and a believing christian, as between the knowledge that a gardener hath of plants and flowers in his master's garden, he knows how to dress them, knows the names and the nature of every particular plant and flower there: but though the knowledge of the owner of it does not extend to all those particularities, yet he knows it to be his, conveyed to him, and of right belonging to him. Another man delights in a beautiful field and garden, pleases himself with the variety of the flowers and pleasures of the walks; the owner delights in it upon this account too, loves to consider the nature of the trees and plants; but he has a knowledge of it, and delight in it, above the others, because of his property, he knows the possession of it, and the commodities arising from it, to be his. This knowledge is always with some glimmerings of hope, that God and Christ are his according to the tenor of the covenant.

Though there be not a full assurance, the title and evidence is not clear to him, and may seem to have some flaw in it, which he hath not yet overcome, yet all true faith hath something of comfort and hope with it, for it is wrought by the Spirit as a comforter, convincing of the sufficiency as well as the necessity of the righteousness of Christ, upon which the soul in this saving knowledge casts itself, and follows this glimmering till he comes to a greater light, whereby to read his own interest in Christ, as Paul did, *Who loved me and gave himself for me*, Gal. 2. 20. Afterwards indeed there is a knowledge of feeling; *I know whom I have believed*, 2 Tim. 1. 12. I have known

him by faith, and I know him by feeling, I knew him to be good before, and therefore I trusted him. But since, I knew whom I have trusted, and have a rich experience of him.

There is *no saving knowledge without* this fiducial act. It properly follows upon our espousals with God : it is a knowledge after contract ; *I will betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord, Hos. 2. 20*, and therefore must be a knowledge of faith. He that hath no lively motions hath no life, he must have breath at least ; nor is there any lively knowledge of the grace of God in Christ without vehement desires at least after him, and unutterable believing groans. Can any man know God in his wrath, who does not tremble at it, or any man know God in his grace, that does not catch hold of it ? He knows him not, that thinks him not excellent enough to be the sole object of his confidence and affiance. No man that disparages that which is truly excellent in itself, can be said to know the excellency of that thing. If I set up any thing in the world as the ground of my trust more than God, it is evident that I acknowledge a greater virtue, strength, and power in that than in God and Christ, whom I refuse, and may well be said not to know and understand the transcendent goodness of him that I reject.

Lay not therefore any claim to a knowledge of God as almighty, infinite goodness, and tender compassions, if you resign not up yourselves wholly to him, to his grace to pardon you, to his power to relieve you, to the death of Christ to mortify sin, and that in his own way, the way of his precept, not in ways of our own invention, and presumption. But alas ! do not many prop up themselves in some earthly thing, as if there were no God in Israel to be sought unto, strengthen themselves in their own righteousness, as if there were no Mediator commissioned and sent into the world ? Confidence in any other thing denies the being of God, or if not that, yet it denies the excellency of God, if not that, the goodness of God,

and so implies that there is no knowledge of God as he is gracious, and glorious in himself, because there is no trust in him. I am sore afraid, most of the knowledge of God and Christ we have in this age, is a mere notion of faith without value, like a ring without the diamond. He knows best, that hath concocted in his heart, what he understood in his head.

The *highest rational knowledge* of God cannot profit *without* this knowledge of faith. The general and common knowledge of Christ is but a knowing after the flesh, not in the power of his Spirit, and can no more advantage, than the Jews' knowing him, or Judas's living with him, did them or him without believing. In the scripture, christians are not called knowing persons, but believers. It is a pleasure to a physician to consider the nature of a medicine, and pierce into the quality of each ingredient in it; but if he be invaded by the disease for which that medicine is proper, all his knowledge of it and delight in it will be no support to his body, unless he takes it and joins it in a close contest with the distemper. All the pleasure he hath had in the search and contemplation of it, and the experience of the strength of it upon his patients, will not check the malady of his vitals, or stop the rage of the humour, though his knowledge were as large as Solomon's, without application of the remedy. Christ is the remedy for our spiritual diseases, faith is the application.

A man is no more a christian by knowing the nature of God and Christ in a notional way, or being able to unfold the mysteries of redemption in generous strains, than a philosopher, who can discourse accurately of the nature of metals and jewels, can be said to be rich, when he hath never a penny in his purse. The knowledge entitles him to a natural wisdom, but the possession to wealth. If he were a slave in the gallies, the riches of his knowledge would never strike off the weight of his chains; one jewel in possession to pay for his redemption would

be of more value than all his philosophy. And just such a person is he, that delights in the knowledge of his bags and quantity of gold, but makes not application of it to his present indigencies; it is as if he had none, but were the poorest beggar that craves an alms from door to door.

There is as great a difference between this notional and fiducial knowledge, as there is between the knowledge of an angel who comes under the wing of Christ for his confirmation in his happy estate, and the knowledge of a devil who rejected him as his head, which is thought by some to be the devil's sin. It is likely, by scripture, it was pride, and probably it was pride of this nature, as I may have occasion to shew in the prosecuting the doctrine of unbelief. As the angels' knowledge of Christ being proposed as their head, could not have advantaged them, without an act of consent to him, and acceptance of him, answering to faith in us, as well as knowledge, (they had not else come under his wing as rational creatures, by an election and approbation of him) so neither can our knowledge of him, without an accepting of him.

The clearer a saving knowledge is, *the stronger will be our faith and confidence* in God and Christ, and the stronger our faith *the stronger our knowledge*. As the more knowledge a physician hath of the nature of simples, the more confidently will he apply them; and the more he finds their virtue in the application, the surer knowledge of them he arrives unto. The more we spiritually understand God, the more we shall trust him on his own credit, and this is properly faith. All the attributes of God are the supports of faith; when we know the strength of them, and are sensible of their sufficiency, and our own need, we shall with greater assurance rely upon them, as they are engaged in his promises; his wisdom in making promises that he can accomplish, his faithfulness in making promises that he will accomplish, his power in being able to make good every tittle of his word.

There is not an attribute of God but inspires faith with a fresh vigour. And so the more we spiritually and sensibly know the tenour of Christ's commission, the ends of his death, the causes and ends of his resurrection and ascension, we shall the more willingly cast our souls upon that security, and draw sweetness by faith from every flower in God's garden. The angels adore the goodness of God more fervently than we can, and have a greater confidence in that goodness, because their apprehensions of it are clearer, and their taste and experience of it hath been stronger. The brightest needles move quickest, and stick fastest to the loadstone. The clearer our knowledge, the closer our adherence. He that spiritually knows God and Christ, will rest upon God's bare word with more stedfastness, than if he had the strongest assurances of all the princes in the world for a great estate.

7. It is a *progressive* knowledge, still aiming at more knowledge and more improvements of it. Though the knowledge of God be at first infused into us by the inspiration of the Spirit, yet neither that in the head, nor grace in the heart, have their full strength at their first birth, but attain their stature gradually. Natural knowledge, which is a common work of God upon men, arrives not at its growth in a moment, but in tract of time. He that first found out the inclination of the loadstone to the pole, did not presently apprehend all the virtues of the loadstone, nor was able to sail about the world by it, though this afterwards grew up from the first invention. We go up a mountain step by step. Christ does not perform all the parts of his prophetic office at once, there is a further declaration of the name of God to succeed the first; *I have declared thy name, and will declare it, that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, John 17. 26.* And the ravishments by the virtue and influences of his second, shall exceed those of the first revelation, for those further declarations are accompanied with greater manifestations of affec-

tion, and fuller communications of divine love to the soul. Some things are too bright for the soul at the first opening of its weak eyes. Men at their first conversion have but glimpses of things, as the man who saw *men as trees walking*, till Christ put his hand upon his eyes, and made him see objects before him more distinctly. As the stone from our hearts, so scales from our eyes, fall off by degrees. No man is so wise but he may be wiser.

(1.) All true knowledge is *alluring*. The first sight of a mystery is transporting and also alluring to a further enquiry; *A wise man will hear and will increase learning*, *Prov. 1. 5*: he will arise to more sublime thoughts and discoveries: he will be adding, as in arithmetic, figure to figure, till he comes to a just sum, deducing one rule from another, till he come to the utmost: as the branch grows from the body of the tree, and one branch from another. It is the nature of all true knowledge to sharpen the mind for more. He that hath found a mine, will follow the vein till he masters it. The scholar that hath a taste of any curious learning, will not leave the pursuit till he hath pierced into the heart of it, and by turning over books and stretching his thoughts, hath increased his stock. It is also the nature of spiritual knowledge to put an edge upon the appetite, and open the understanding wider, that it may be filled with more. The voice of it is that of the grave, *give, give*.

The times of the gospel were promised to be inquisitive times; *Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased*, *Dan. 12. 4*. A little knowledge of God does not hush our desires, but awaken them. The barbarous people by tasting the fruits of Italy were not at rest, till they saw and conquered the country. One taste of God and Christ is to make us cry out, *Evermore, Lord, give me this bread*: it is to enlarge our appetite, not to dull and scantle it; to engage us to make further enquiries into *the hope of his calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheri-*

tance in the saints, Eph. 1. 16. They had a spirit of knowledge. But the apostle prays for further perfection in the knowledge of Christ, and a fuller opening the eyes of their understandings, to get into his secret things, and behold more of his glory. It is as natural for a saving knowledge to press to further attainments, as it is for a counterfeit knowledge to flag in its pursuit.

(2.) It is utterly impossible that any man can have a saving knowledge of God, who stands *satisfied in what he has*, without any desires to make a further progress. As it is impossible faith or a full assent or consent to the doctrine of the gospel can be without unutterable groans for the full application of the good things promised in it, so it is impossible this saving knowledge can be without eager thirsting for a larger communication. He that seeks not after more light, never had any saving glimmerings of any in his heart, *He that hath understanding, seeks knowledge, but the mouths of fools feed on foolishness, Prov. 15. 14.* The seeking knowledge is a sign of an understanding heart, any man's feeding on foolishness is an evidence that he understands nothing of the sweetness of a spiritual banquet. That merchant that is sensible of gain, will increase his venture, and desire richer commodities: the understanding heart will venture out for more spiritual knowledge.

As no man hath true grace who does not make additions, and rise to the exercise of those graces which are more spiritual, more the delight of God, and the beauty of the soul: so neither hath he any taste of God and Christ, who does not aspire and travel to more spiritual discoveries of his glory. There is not only to be a knowledge, but a following *on to know the Lord, Hos. 6. 3*, a following *hard after him*, to see his glory, *Psal. 63. 2, 8*; he never tasted the sweetness of it that is cloyed with it, nor ever understood the beauty of the prospect, that is not desirous to get up to the top of the hill to pleasure his eyes with a full view. An acquiescence in any de-

gree is a sign the knowledge pretended is but a counterfeit, that God is not the delightful and estimable object of his mind, that there is no experimental acquaintance with him. Certainly, he that esteems him, will desire to lie at his feet to receive his instructions, and will implore Christ for the exercise of his prophetic office, which is as truly exercised by his Spirit in the world, as it was in his person in the days of his flesh.

This principle of saving knowledge is *an active principle*. If it be *the light of life*, a living and lively light, it will by its activity proceed from strength to strength, from dawn to day-light, from day-light to sun-rise, and from that to the meridian, *Prov. 4. 18*. The sun in a statue, will stand like a stock, but not the sun in the heavens. If through the darkness of the understanding there is an alienation *from the life of God*, *Eph. 4. 18*, then by an enlightened understanding, there is an approach to the life of God. Can partakers of the life of God, stand at a stay? Can we ever be like God by ignorance, and small measures of knowledge? God cannot increase in the knowledge of himself, because the knowledge of himself, is, as himself, infinite: but that soul that is truly god-like, aspires to as high a knowledge of him, as the creature is capable of. He hath no desire to take further steps in grace, who does not desire to thrive in the knowledge of Christ which is as the dew of grace.

There is no conformity to Christ, without *a thirst after more knowledge of God*. Our Saviour grew in wisdom as he did in stature, *Luke 2. 52*. Not that Christ had any sinful ignorance, but the habits of wisdom and knowledge infused into his human nature, grew up to maturity according to his natural growth. They are not his members that grow not proportionably to the head; and being rational members, they must grow in knowledge as well as in strength. The image of God in the new creatures partly consists *in knowledge*, *Col. 3. 10*. Yet it is not necessary to this

conformity, that all should have an equal degree of knowledge. It is probable, all in heaven have not an equal vision of God, since there are different degrees of glory; yet the least degree of the vision of God there, is with a perfect conformity, and without the mixture of the least impurity. But there is no conformity here to Christ, without some knowledge of him. Some grow according to means and measures, and an ardent thirst for fuller manifestations of him. Some think that in heaven there will be a constant proficiency in the knowledge of God; * and why not, since finite is capable of additions, as numbers are of more units, which may be increased by adding; yet none so great, but may be made greater by addition of more to them?

He can have no desire to enjoy God, who does not desire a *clearer knowledge of him*. What desires can he have of fruition, who does not delight to know more of him, whom he pretends he is willing to enjoy? He hath no mind to set foot in heaven, nor hath any notions of the happiness of that place, whose affections are not enlarged to a further prospect of him, who is the sole essential happiness there. Whosoever hath had any taste of heavenly pleasure, will endeavour to beautify his understanding with divine objects, since part of the happiness of heaven consists in a perfection of that faculty of the mind.

It is then certain that a knowing soul cannot be idle, but inquisitive: spiritual knowledge is no less attractive than natural. When we come to a little knowledge in those lower things, we are still aiming at more. As those that found out new countries, were still making more voyages to perfect their enquiry. It is impossible that any who have tasted the saving knowledge of God, can rest in low measures; but they will be attempting a full discovery.

This progressiveness consists chiefly

(1.) In a *clearer* sight of what was known in *part*.

* Zanch. in Hos, 6, 3.

Not so much extensively, in an increase of particular objects ; as intensively, in a clearer view and more spiritual apprehension of what we knew before ; as growth in grace is not in new graces, for they are all included in the habit of grace first put into the soul, but in a strength of each particular grace, and the actings of it. As a man that studies the nature of some particular creature, by his search comes into a sight, not of new objects, but of more reasons of things, and a clearer inspection into that which was the object of his knowledge before. The knowledge in heaven consists not so much in the knowing new objects, as in knowing with an inexpressible clearness God and Christ, whom we know but in a *glass*, and that *darkly*, in the world : not in an addition of new objects, but an accession to the degrees of our knowledge.

(2.) It is a growth in *estimation* of the object, and *strength of desires* for it. It is a certain rule in spirituals, as it is in naturals, every thing when it moves regularly to its centre, moves more swiftly towards the end of its motion ; so will the motion of the soul be in longings and thirstings after a more full view of God and Christ, the nearer it comes to salvation ; the *soul breaks for the longings it hath to the judgments of God*, *Psal. 119. 20*, the methods of his wisdom ; one desire treads upon another ; he desires and is covetous for more longings for him ; he longs, and thinks he does not long enough. It grows in higher estimations of him ; *The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver*, *Psal. 119. 72*. He values it daily more and more, above all the vanities of this earth.

(3.) It is not a growth or desire terminating in a notion of God, so much as *the fruits and proper intendments of that notion*. It is a mystery of faith and a mystery of godliness ; a mystery to be known, and a mystery to be practised ; but the growth is in the mystery of faith, in order to a growth in it as it is a mystery of godliness ; to know God for the ends

for which he is revealed, and Christ for the ends for which he was commissioned. It is a *desire for the way of God's precepts*, *Psal.* 119. 27, 33, not to indulge carnal affections, or an intellective curiosity; but to direct his paths and strengthen him in his walk. A man in a journey desires not so much the knowledge of the nature of the soil, or of the fruits of the country, as the way of it, to attain his journey's end.

David having a knowledge of God, and being delighted with it, desires to be acquainted with the way to the fruition of that whereof he had some sight. Hence he so often desires God to open his eyes, that he might behold him; and teach him the way, that he might attain to him. He that hath a delightful prospect of excellent buildings, and fruitful grounds, which he may have the possession of, would have a more accurate survey of them. The next step naturally is to desire to know a way thither; *A wise man will increase in learning*, *Prov.* 1. 5, חֲכָמִים, the word signifies properly the mariner's art, or pilot's skill, in steering a ship; or an acuteness in acting, a wise man will hear and increase in learning, in order to improve what he knows for his direction and steerage in his course in the world, which is a stormy sea, and needs care and skill.

II. As there is a difference in the effects of this knowledge, so also in *the manner of it*.

1. Saving knowledge is *distinct*. Though grace be not perfect, yet there is an habit of grace, and all the parts of grace in the soul of a renewed man; so though this knowledge be not perfect, yet there is a distinct view of God and Christ in all the necessary parts of knowledge. Another may know the attributes of God, but he sees not the glory of them shining into the heart; *To give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*, *2 Cor.* 4. 6. It is a distinct view of God's perfections, in their affecting glory, of his wisdom, in contriving redemp-

tion ; his justice, in punishing our surety ; his mercy, in bestowing pardon in his beloved one ; and the beauty of his holiness in all ; and of those a believer hath a distinct apprehension in his mind, and a gracious and distinct impression of them on his heart ; he knows the nature of Christ, his offices, the fruits of his death, and comforts of his resurrection, the cordials of his intercession so orderly, as to make use of them in his several exigencies, and have recourse to each of them by faith, in his distinct pressures. It is a shining into the heart, as the sun upon the world at the creation, whereby Adam had a distinct view of the creatures then formed ; and in the new creation, this divine light breaks into the soul, repairs the faculty whereby there may be a plain spiritual view of the glory of God, as figured in the appearance of Christ. An owl sees the light, but not distinctly that or any thing by it, not because there is want of light, but a want of a due disposition and strength in the eye to discern it.

It is a manifestation of God's *name*, *John* 17. 6. God was more distinctly known by his name *Jehovah* among the Israelites, than he had been in the world before, i. e. in the manifestations of his truth and power in performing the promise of deliverance to them ; so he is known in Christ in fuller expressions, and more letters of his name, than he was to the Israelites. The other knowledge, is as the sight of a man in his picture ; this, as the knowledge of a man in his person, whereby his lively disposition and excellencies are discerned. It is a knowledge by inward manifestation and irradiation of the soul. The times of ignorance are called night and darkness in scripture, in the night there is no evidence in the true figures and colours of things ; the time of divine discovery is called day, and light ; and believers, *light in the Lord*, there is a plain appearance of the object in its excellency manifest to them, whereby they discern things that differ ; the difference between Christ and

the world, grace, and sin. It differs from the knowledge of others, as the sight of a ship by an unskilful eye from that of the shipwright or pilot, who understands all the parts of the workman's skill. Or the sight of a picture by a limner, and one ignorant of the art; one sees the hidden pieces of art, the other the outward figure and composure.

The knowledge of the christian is the work of the Spirit by special grace, the other is the work of education and industry. A divine work is more clear than an human. It is such a knowledge as the apostles had after the Holy Ghost came upon them, and had dispelled their darkness, scattered their shadows, and refined their minds, and made them see the counsel of God in the sufferings of Christ, and behold the bottom of it with a divine light; whereas before, their knowledge was confused and feeble, they scarce knew before he was to die, after his death they understood his sufferings, but nothing of the true reason and design of them, till the Spirit descended upon them; and therefore Christ tells them in the time of his life, that though he had been so long with them, they *did not know him*, *John* 14. 9. Unless the knowledge of God and Christ be thus distinct; it may stuff the head, but not improve the soul.

2. It is a *certain* knowledge. Not a guess or imagination, but a real thing; as if the soul had a perfect demonstration. It is surer than the knowledge of the first principles or common notions in man; surer than the perceptions of sense, or conclusions of reason. The knowledge of things we have by experience, depends upon the deceivable sense, which often needs the correction of reason; the knowledge we have by reason is uncertain, because the mind of man is often prepossessed with crooked notions, which cannot be the rule to measure straight truths by. Reason is full of uncertainty, and dubious; and the more we know by natural reason, the more we doubt. But this know-

ledge is more divine than any demonstration,* because it is not founded upon human reason, but divine and infallible revelation ; which can neither deceive nor be deceived. It is by an inward sense and taste, which renders a man more certainly intelligent of what he feels, than all the men in the world can be by a rational discourse without a sense. Truth is inlaid in the heart, there is a *plerophory and full assurance of knowledge*, Col. 2. 2.

† Other knowledge fluctuates, and a man rather suspects that he sees, than sees clearly ; which is rather an opinion of God and Christ than knowledge ; such as the philosophers had of natural things, which they could not assure themselves whether it was clear science or opinion. But saving knowledge is a solid and certain apprehension of the object known. Hence it is called a *sight of the glory of God with open face*, 2 Cor. 3. 18, an intellectual spiritual sight, the *evidence of things not seen*, Heb. 11. 1, *ελεγχος*. Such a conviction that brings a fulness of light with it, to clear the thing, and make the heart fall down under the power of it, and nonplusses all disputes against it.

As the Spirit so strongly convinces of sin, as to arrest all objections and pleas, banish them out of the heart of the sinner, so he strongly convinces of the truth of God and Christ, and chases away all the carnal reasonings, as the light of the rising sun does darkness before it. It is such an evidence, that brings substance along with it. *The substance of things hoped for*. It evidences God and Christ, and the things of God and Christ to be substantial, solid things, and not imaginary notions, and doubtful opinions. This was promised in the times of the gospel ; *My people shall know my name ; they shall know in that day, that I am he that doth speak, behold it is I*, Isa. 52. 6.

The repetition of a thing in the Hebrew dialect,

* Θεϊότερόν τι πάρος ἀποδείξω, Origen.

† Amyrald. Thes. Salmur. part 2. page 91. Thes. 36.

shows the the certainty of the thing spoken of. They knew God by the prophets, they should more surely know him in the times of the gospel, in the greatness of the deliverance he would work for them. It is clearer than the prophetic visions; for it is a sight that is produced by the dawning of the day, *and the arising of the day-star in the heart*, *2 Pet. 1. 19*, which is meant of a knowledge of Christ in this world, for in heaven the knowledge shall be by the light of the sun. It is a knowledge here which is the forerunner of a full knowledge in heaven, as the day-star is of the rising sun. And Christ himself affirms to God this certainty of knowledge; *They have surely known that I came out from thee*, *John 17. 8*; which is more than a loose opinion. And indeed, there is nothing more sure to an opened understanding than a divine light, though to an eye sore with sin, the light is as imperceptible as the light of the sun to the eyes of an owl.

(1.) The *manner* of this knowledge must bear some proportion to the *object*, and the manner of revealing it. As the object excels all other objects, so the manner of knowing must be different from all other manner of knowledge, and therefore more certain in what we know of it, by how much the objects, God and Christ, are more excellent and real, the living God and an eternal Christ. It is not coined by flesh and blood, nor depends upon the blindness of reason. But it is *from* the Father which is in heaven, as well as *of* the Father which is in heaven, *Matt. 16. 17*. A manifestation from Christ; *I have manifested thy name; a sure word*, *John 17. 6*, whereby it is taught, *2 Pet. 1. 19*, surer than all the maxims of the world. The object is most real. God, the author of all being, the fountain of nature and grace, Christ, the band of the whole creation. The manner of revealing was most certain, the manner of knowing must be in some measure suitable to the object known, and the way of its manifestation; the principles of faith are more certain than those of any science.

(2.) It is wrought by the enlightening virtue of *the Holy Ghost*, and therefore must be most certain. The knowledge of God, as well as faith, is the gift of God wrought in the soul by inspiration. God gives not erroneous principles to the creature. The debauchery of our reasons was not from God originally, but from the lasting invasion of sin, and permitted by God as a judge to continue for our punishment. This teaching is by *the Spirit of truth*, *John* 14. 17, 1 *John* 2. 27, who inwardly presents the excellency of God and Christ to the understanding, as the word does to the ear, and that not like a flash of lightning that gives a vanishing light, and after leaves us in a worse darkness than it found us; but he abides as a Spirit of truth in all the darkness of this world, for *he dwells with you, and shall be in you*.

The instruction will be certain, till the Spirit prove an uncertain teacher. It is his *demonstration*, and therefore powerful, 1 *Cor.* 2. 4, and surer than any demonstration by reason, by how much the Spirit, the teacher of it, is above all the reason in the world; it is *the Spirit* that *searcheth the deep things of God*, 2 *Cor.* 2. 9, 10. Mysteries above the ken of corrupted reason, and hid in the secret place of the Most High, which are therefore most precious, and of the greatest reality and value. Since therefore this knowledge is a fruit of divine teaching, and from an infinitely wise and infallible teacher; the soul of a believer is more assured of the reality of it than it is of its own life and being. He knows by sense and reason that he lives, but the knowledge he hath of God and Christ, is by the Spirit, a principle infinitely superior to both the other.

(3.) Saving knowledge is such a knowledge for kind as *Christ had of God*. The words and declaration of God, which God gave to him, he gave to his disciples, *John* 17. 8. The knowledge Christ as man had of God, is communicated to a believer, in the kind, though not in the same measure. And herein

does consist partly our conformity to Christ; the soul is conformed to Christ in all the parts of it: it consists not in the repair of one faculty, for that would be but half a resemblance. It would be monstrous for the will to be conformed to Christ, and the understanding to the devil; the will to be acted by grace, and the understanding possessed by nature. It cannot indeed be supposed in the order of natural operations, how the will can have an holy conformity to Christ, till the understanding hath an intelligent conformity to him.

As the will is made like the will of Christ, so the mind is enlightened in a similitude in the mind of Christ, that as Christ is in the heart, the ground of *the hope of glory*, so he is in it the guide of the mind. *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, Phil. 2. 5: But we have the mind of Christ. The spiritual man judgeth all things, 1 Cor. 2. 16,* because he understands the mind of Christ. Because his mind is informed and enlightened by that Spirit which illuminated the human mind of Christ. And needs must he judge as Christ did, who hath not only a knowledge of the doctrine of Christ, but a mind acted by the same Spirit of Christ, and suited to the mind of Christ, and hath such notions and piercing insight into the things of God for the kind as Christ had. I will not say that this is the sense of the place, though something of that nature seems to be included in the manner of the apostle's argument, or may be inferred from thence.

We may be said to know as Christ does, as we are said to be holy as Christ is holy, in regard of likeness, as the light of the stars and sun are true light, have a likeness one to the other, and are of the same kind, yet the light of the sun is more full and clear than that in the stars. As there will at the last day be a glory of the body *like to the glorious body of Christ, Phil. 3. 3, 21,* and a glory of the soul much more like to the soul of Christ: so there is an initial likeness to Christ in each faculty in every renewed man.

Now as Christ's knowledge of God was certain, and the knowledge of himself was certain, so this saving knowledge of God and Christ in a true believer is as certain for the measure of it in this world. And though there be doubts and waverings in the hearts of believers, yet they do not respect the object, the nature of God and Christ and the ends of his death, but are in regard of the subject, and an interest in those glorious things.

Now, though this knowledge be imperfect, yet it is certain in every believer. They know, though it be but *in part*, 1 Cor. 13. 12, and that which they know is certain. There is certainty in star-light as well as in sun-light, though the light be not so much. *We see through a glass darkly.* It is a certain sight, though not clear, because the organ is not fully fitted for it. Every true believer can say as those, *We believe and art sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God*, John 6. 69. Before the light of the knowledge of God broke in savingly upon him, he had doubtful notions of those things, he counted them as shadows, discoursed of them because the rest of the world did, and because he had been brought up that way, yet without any savour of them: he knew not whether he knew or no, as Paul, *whether he was in or out of the body.* But since he beholds such a clearness and reality in the mysteries of the gospel, that he is more confirmed in the certainty of them than in any thing in the world. There is a light shot in, which carries its own evidence with it, and is too bright to be nonplussed by the darkness of reason. The things of God and Christ are discerned in the head and realized in the heart.

3. It is a *firm* knowledge. Some have a floating knowledge of God: truth in their mind does dance as the image of the sun or stars in a pail, according to the motion of the water. Truth and error are like a pair of scales, sometimes up and sometimes down. But as true faith, so saving knowledge, is steadfast, like a needle sticking to the loadstone with-

out wavering; *Steadfastness of your faith*, Col. 2. 5; *ερείωμα*, *firmamentum fidei*, firmament of faith, as stable as the heaven and heavenly bodies keeping their constant stations and courses, and admitting nothing heterogeneous into them: it is but a shadow of knowledge which halts between two opinions. The knowledge of Christ being admitted upon the highest account, frames the soul into an acquiescence in it. It is *an unction from the Holy One*, 1 John 2. 20; which as it opens, so it fortifies the understanding. It is an habit; *who by reason of use*, Heb. 5. 14, *by reason of habit*, in the Greek. The faculty is firm and can never be totally vitiated; though it may, as the natural taste, be impaired by some diseased humour tincturing the palate, yet it returns again to its former temper. It is such a knowledge that keeps men in a way of righteousness, and prevents them from returning to be swine. It makes them see the mire to loathe it, and the purity of God to love him. They that are taught of God, depart not from his truth. *I have not departed from thy judgments, for thou hast taught me*, Psal. 119. 102. The psalmist renders God's teaching him as a reason why he did not depart from God's judgments.

Therefore that knowledge of God which is taught by God is an establishing knowledge, not a volatile, airy thing, such as children have, which are *carried away by every wind of doctrine*, Eph. 4. 14, tossed to and fro between one passion and another, rather than between one reason and another; but a settling ballast, such as the martyrs had who were slain for the word of God, the divine *λόγος*, and the testimony they bore to his person and offices, which they held, and held as an undoubted truth, Rev. 5. 9. They held the transcript of God and Christ, imprinted on their hearts firm, as a marble does the letters engraven on it; the other sort of knowledge is fading, as easily blotted out as letters upon sand with the next wind. In the one there is only a *taste of the powers of the world to come*, of the death and resurrection of Christ,

which are the powers of the age of the Messiah, which was called by the Jews the world to come, *Ileb.* 6. 5, the other is as a constant sight in the heart, as firm as a graft in the stock which becomes one with it: not only a light of truth but a love of truth, notions spring into the mind, and love stands ready to set and root them.

If any man therefore pretends to a knowledge of God, and withdraws from him to the things of this world, and the miry ways of sin, he knew no more of God than a swine does of the cleansing bath. He discovers a greater hatred of God; for whensoever any good is forsaken after it is pretended to be known, it shows a greater detestation of it and desire of disunion from it. Whatsoever therefore the pretences of apostates are, they never knew God, because God is so lovely in all his perfections, that it is impossible for any soul that knows him, not to love him and cleave to him.

4. This saving knowledge of God and Christ is in all the affections, which attend it in the soul, *inexpressible*. The affections rising from it are inexpressible by the soul that feels it: all words are below the sense, as a spark is below the brightness of a flame. In common things we find often a secret power excite a liking or dislike in our mind which we cannot fully discover to others, either in the greatness of the pleasure or abhorrency which is in ourselves. The natural affections we have to something admit of no expression; much less the spiritual affections. A friend that you know and love dearly, whose virtues you admire, you can never discover so exquisitely in his endowments, as that another should admire and love him with an affection equal to what you bear to him. Who can imagine the depth of David's sense in his contemplations of God, under those spiritual strains he clothes himself with in his psalms, unless he felt the same inward transports as David did? Who can understand the exquisite satisfaction our Saviour had in his thoughts of his Father, in his ad-

dresses to him, and obedience to his will, unless he could be equal to him in all those? It is the same thing in spiritual as in natural knowledge. No man can understand the delight a scholar takes in his inquiries into some curious learning, but he that hath had a taste of the same pleasure himself, no more than a man can understand the heat of fire that never felt it. Paul in his revelations heard words *unspeakable* in their own nature, as well as *unlawful* for him to utter, 2 Cor. 12. 4. Nor can any conceive the inward delights of a soul in the meditations of God and Christ, who never had a spiritual view of the excellency of those ravishing objects.

PART VI.

THE INSTRUCTION OF THE SUBJECT.

The insufficiency of all other knowledge—The order of God's working—The excellence of religion—Miserable state of the ignorant—Awakening considerations—Ignorance inconsistent with christianity—It is Satan's chain by which he keeps men in captivity—The cause of all sin—Wilful ignorance the cause of final condemnation.

I. **SEE** the *insufficiency* of all other knowledge to eternal happiness. Other sciences are shadows of wisdom, this a sound wisdom, *Prov.* 3. 21, referring to the study of the wisdom of God. All other kind of knowledge delights a man at present, helps him to pass his life with some comfort, but gives not a drop of consolation at the hour of death, or the least cordial for his wounded, drooping spirit; whereas this sound wisdom is a treasure of things new and old, to support under any calamity. It will keep us from being *afraid of sudden fear, or of the desolation of the wicked when it comes*; for the Lord, that is savingly known, shall be our confidence, and keep our feet from being taken, *Prov.* 3. 24, 25, 26.

(1.) Skill in the affairs of the world, and arts useful to human societies, *first appeared* in the seed of the

serpent, and the idolatrous generation of the world. The posterity of Cain, the head of the unbelieving world, are upon record in scripture for such inventions. When his generations are reckoned, there is Jabal who first invented the art of ordering cattle, and Jubal his brother the inventor of music, and Tubal Cain the first artificer in brass and iron, *Gen.* 4. 20, 21, 22. No such remark set upon the children of Seth reckoned, *Gen.* 5. 21, 22, only Enoch's walking with God, and Lamech's prophecy of Noah, as if he had been the promised seed; their minds were taken up with that knowledge which fitted them for a better life. The knowledge of the Greeks, whence the choicest learning was transmitted to Europe, was derived from Phœnicia to Egypt, the one the posterity of Canaan, the other also of Cham, both eminent for idolatry.

(2.) Christ never directed men in the knowledge of *any thing but of God*. He never took flesh, nor laid it down to make us philosophers or artificers, skilful in the affairs of the world, or knowing in political concerns, but to purchase for us the knowledge of the mysteries of heaven, and sanctifying grace; he was a prophet to manifest the name of God, not the nature of creatures. He came not to instruct us in the nature of the elements, the reason of natural motions, to inform us of the nature of the stars and heavenly bodies, but the nature of God, the designs and methods of his grace. The teaching worldly skill was too low for the grandeur of his prophetic office, and should be too low for our choicest consideration, but only in order to the enlarging our faculties for more clear apprehensions, or illustrations of divine knowledge, to be foundations for spiritual meditations, and more sensible perception of heavenly truth.

Our Saviour knew all the secrets of nature, the usefulness of human arts to the comfort of the world, but never recommended any of them as sufficient to happiness. Nor after his resurrection in his discourses with the disciples, did he acquaint them with

the curiosities of Paradise or the orders of angels: but with the prophecies concerning himself and ends of his death, and resurrection, and glory in heaven; *Luke 24*. Had those been sufficient or necessary means, the scripture had been full of natural demonstrations, it had been a book of nature instead of a book of grace. It was not the design of it to render men scholars, but christians: and though there be many excellent sprinklings of natural learning in divine writ, they are occasionally set down to lead us to the understanding the nature of God, and our own duty; the two states of man, his misery by sin and his happiness by grace. And therefore to rest in that which God never rested in, Christ never taught or admired, to rest in that which devils and wicked men are well acquainted with, and are no enemies unto, can never render a soul happy.

(3.) It can never *of itself* help us to the knowledge of divine things. A man with treasures of other knowledge in his head, may have, and often has, a heart insensible of the beauty of God and excellency of Christ. It may make a man higher by head than other men, but never make him like to God. The highest intellectuals without those saving apprehensions, are but peacocks' feathers with black feet: They can no more purify the soul, than the blood of bulls and goats could atone for our sins. The understanding the intricacies of nature, and the most ingenious mysteries in the world, and a connexion of all the most useful worldly sciences, cannot advantage our spiritual and eternal happiness, because the things themselves which are the objects of that knowledge cannot do it. The knowledge of a thing cannot do more than the thing known can do. If the bowels of nature and moral truth were as open to any of us as they are to the highest angel; nay, had we an understanding of all divine as well as human mysteries without this affectionate knowledge, it would render us just nothing; *Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and knowledge, and though I have all*

faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing, 1 Cor. 13. 2; of no account before God. A man may be theologically knowing, and spiritually ignorant.

Nicodemus was none of the lowest sect, a pharisee, nor of the lowest form among them, a ruler among them, had the knowledge of the law above the vulgar; yet was ignorant of the design of the Messiah, and the mystery of the new birth. A man may be excellent in the grammar of the scripture, yet not understand the spiritual sense of it. As a man may have so much Latin as to construe a physician's prescription, and tell the names of the plants mentioned in it, yet understand nothing of the particular virtues of those plants, or have any pleasure in the contemplation of them. So we may discourse of God, and the perfections of God, and the intendments of the great things of Christ, without a sense of them; though this be a good preparatory to a spiritual knowledge, yet it is insufficient of itself without some farther addition. It does not heal the soul's eye, nor chase away the spiritual darkness. *In much wisdom is much grief, Eccles. 1. 18.* In this wisdom only there is the choicest pleasure.

(4.) It often *hurts and hinders* men from the saving knowledge of God and Christ. The wisest men are not always the disciples of Christ, but many times enemies to him; the most ingenious men have often been the most malicious and ingenious devils. Natural wisdom is most apt to count divine wisdom foolishness, 1 Cor. 1. 21, 23: a hatred of Christ is often concealed under it. The greatest philosophers in the primitive times were the sharpest enemies to christianity, and while they were intent upon human wisdom, they counted divine revelation no better than a fable, and scorned to sit at the feet of divine revelation, which agreed not with their own idolized principles. Unsansctified wisdom is the devil's greatest tool. The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field, and this creature is selected by the devil to be

the instrument of the first seduction of mankind. The affectation of a knowledge not due to Adam, brought a cloud upon Adam and his posterity, and separated him from the knowledge of his Creator, which was to be his sole happiness. The attention, poring upon red hot iron, or other metals, blinds the eye, and hinders it from seeing the sun or any thing else by it. Too much intensesness in carnal wisdom dims the eye to spiritual objects. The common people knew Christ, and thirsted for the knowledge of him, *Mark* 12. 37, when the intelligent pharisees were as spiritually blind as bats, and so wicked as to boast of their unbelieving ignorance, and set it as a pattern for the people; *Have any of the rulers or of the pharisees believed on him? But this people who know not the law, are cursed, John* 7. 48, 49. Upon which account it is remarked by the evangelical historian as a matter of astonishment, that *a great number of the priests were obedient to the faith, Acts* 6: 7. It is better to have a little of that knowledge which conducts to a Redeemer, than much of that which puffs up, and makes you swell too big for a Mediator.

Well then, let not other knowledge swallow up your pursuits after this. Other knowledge is useful, a gift of God, but it is the hand-maid, not the mistress. It must not thrust out that which is more noble; the light of a candle equals not that of the sun. The angels are not said to bend a look into natural things, though they exactly know the order of them. But it is their employment as well as their happiness to stand before God, to view his face, to enquire into the things of Christ. That which angels most affect, should be the affecting object of our souls; which differ in their spiritual nature but little from that of an angel. Other knowledge will die with our bodies, this will live with our souls; that vanishes with our breath, and this is perfected in glory. That renders us not happy, it does not satisfy our curiosity, it is stone instead of bread, it strikes not off one link from the chain of spiritual darkness in us, it is no

fortification against death and hell. But divine knowledge satisfies our desires, nourishes the soul, is bread to our hunger, light to our eyes, music to our ears, a cordial to our hearts, and the womb of it is full of nothing but felicity. In short, it is the light of life spiritual, eternal, the other at best but the light of a natural and temporary life. Let not therefore the itch of our curiosity, wherewith Adam hath infected us, stop our ears against the instructions of God. Let none of us for a fading delight, lose that which is solid and substantial. We shall be like that person, that while he was busy in contemplating heavenly bodies, tumbled into a ditch; and we, while we aim only at skill in other things, fall into an eternal ignorance of the most lovely and necessary objects.

II. Information. We see here the *order* of God's working, if knowledge be a necessary means. First knowledge, then grace; first knowledge, then that life which is eternal. No house can possibly be built without a foundation; the ground-work first, then the superstructure. Illumination leads the way, and the inclinations of the will follow. God does not cross the natural order of the faculties in his operations, though he does their corruption. He leads men by the cords of a man, by those natural obligations on him, he makes use of in his way of working. Expels darkness, to make room for light; opens the understanding, thereby to incline the will; rectifies the prejudicate opinions of God and Christ, his ways and methods. None can be a priest to offer spiritual sacrifices to God, till he be a prophet to discern what is fit to offer him. An approbation of things that are excellent, and sincerity in the practice, is founded upon *knowledge and judgment*, *Phil.* 1. 9, 10. The new nature is conveyed by the knowledge of God and Christ, *Col.* 3. 10. As ignorance and error were the deformity of the old man, so wisdom and knowledge are the first line in the beauty of the new. The first draught of God is in the mind, and thence terminates in the will.

Nathanael had a false notion of Christ, he was possessed with the opinion of the scribes, the doctors of the law, that *no prophet could come out of Nazareth*, *John* 1. 46. That the people of that place were contemptible in the eye of God, because no prophet had risen from thence, since prophecy was first in the church. But Christ acquaints him with something divine in himself by telling him his motions, what he did *under the fig-tree*, ver. 48, convinced him of the folly of his former notions, discovered to him the truth of his prophetic office, acquaints him with undeniable arguments for his information; then his will and acknowledgments orderly follow; *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel*, ver. 49. None are enlivened, till they be first enlightened by Christ. He is not life to any without being light in the mind; *The life was the light of men*, *John* 1. 4.

III. Information. The *excellency of a true christian*. The best christian is the best scholar: he hath a knowledge in the issue, equal to that of angels, superior to that of devils, more effectual than that of the greatest philosopher, *Prov.* 17. 27. A man of understanding is of *an excellent spirit*. *The Spirit of the Holy God is in him, and light and excellent wisdom*, as was spoken of Daniel, *Dan.* 5. 11, 14. It is a light flowing from the fountain of light, a fruit of divine teaching, and a divine touch; a *true light*, *John* 1. 9. More valuable than all the trifling sceptical knowledge in the world. The meanest believer knows, if not more, yet better than the brightest star that fell from heaven. What others see by candle-light, he sees by the light of the sun; what is hidden to others, is open to him; what others have a natural understanding of, he hath a spiritual, *Col.* 1. 9. οὐνεσις πνευματική. The publicans, who heard the excellent discourses of Christ concerning the nature of the Father, and the design of his coming into the world, were more excellent than the Pharisees who knew the same divine revelation, but had no affection

stirred in them but that of anger against the publisher.

The spiritually knowing christian can discern God in his word, better than others can in all his creatures. He practises what he knows. The excellency of a drug lies not so much in its quality, as in the operation of that quality. We measure the excellency of things, not by the outward appearance, but the nobleness and usefulness of their effects. The meanness of a christian does not so much disparage him, as the excellency of divine knowledge ennoble him. He hath a soul truly godlike, that knows God with a conformity to him. The sun shining upon a body, and the body reflecting the beams of the sun, render it lovely, though low in itself. The knowledge of a christian is by inward and close revelation attended with strong and high reflections. Others know the matter of the gospel, a christian knows the mystery of the gospel. The strongest natural knowledge is not proportionable to divine things, and therefore renders not the soul as excellent as the spiritual knowledge of God : the one fits men for converse with man ; the other for communion with God in this and another world.

IV. Information. *How sad is it for men to abuse to wrong ends the means of knowledge, which in itself is eternal life.* As men turn grace into wantonness, so they turn knowledge into rebellion ; as men will run many scores in debt because grace is free, so some will run more eagerly to sin because they know God is merciful in Christ, and use their knowledge for an encouragement to sin. This is a monster composed of a christian's head, and a swine's heart ; an angel's wings, and a serpent's body. This is like Belshazzar, to quaff healths in the vessels of the temple. To use it well for gracious ends, is like Solomon, to melt down the gold of Ophir for the service of God, and work it into vessels for the sanctuary.

How many are there that are angry with the know-

ledge they have, and the means to get more, because they cannot be at ease in their sins? their lusts are enraged, while their consciences are enlightened. The devil's knowledge is so far from assuaging his malice, that it increases his fury. They know God as a Judge, but regard him not as amiable and worthy to be imitated. The knowledge many philosophers had in the times of the gospel's shine, was so far from enabling them, because of their corruptions, to see the beauty of those discoveries, that they were rather excited to oppose the gospel principles with more stoutness of heart; that it might be truly said of them; *Their wisdom and their knowledge perverted them, Isa. 47. 10.* It is base to turn the means of the knowledge of God, into the service of the devil. It is good when we use them to check us in sin, to wean us from it, and render God more lovely and desirable to our souls. God's discoveries of himself are not that he may be abused, but that he may be loved. He shows himself in his goodness which is his glory; the end of goodness is to attract our affections, not to excite our enmity.

V. Information. If the knowledge of God and Christ be the necessary means to eternal life, *how deplorable is that want of this necessary knowledge of God, which is among us!* How lamentable are the cataracts bred in the eye of our understanding by the power of the flesh! * Nicodemus could not understand the first principles of christianity, though he had been educated in the church, studied the law, had an honourable notion of Christ, was affected with his miracles, and was instructed in the principles of christianity by the mouth of truth itself. How great is our blindness in the things of the kingdom of God! The knowledge many men have of Christ, is a knowledge of his outside, not of his spiritual nature and excellency, so as to relish him. The

* Daille sur 3. Jean.

notions of the goodness of God, and salvation by Christ, are transporting doctrines; men are pleased with them, as children are with the pictures in a philosopher's book, without studying or knowing any thing of the inward sweetness and learning in it; without prying into, and being savourily affected with the mysteries of the gospel. They have a knowledge of God and Christ by report, as men have of a famous prince, without any acquaintance, and happy familiarity with him. As defective in this true knowledge, as a ploughman is in the principles of astronomy. Most men's lives are a dream; they profess religion, account themselves happy in that profession, content themselves with some self-pleasing fancies and notions, without distinct enquiries into the truths of heaven. How sad is it to have eyes, and not know the sun; to have understandings, and not know that which is only worthy to be known; and not see God, who is as visible by his word and works, as the sun by its light! The irrational creatures outstrip us in the sense of what concerns the good of their nature; the crane and swallow, the ox and ass are better proficient in the good belonging to their nature, than corrupted man in what is necessary for his happiness, *Jer. 8. 7. Isa. 1. 3.*

(1.) This ignorance is *natural*. It was the glory of man in his creation to have the knowledge of God. The goodness of the creatures, which God beheld in them after they were formed by him, consisted in their natures and qualities suitable to them. If other creatures had qualities suitable to their natures, the noblest creature could not be defective. If man had been created with an ignorance of God, he could not have been good under that which is the deformity of a rational creature. But since the injury received by the fall, there is not a man that by nature understands God or knows him to seek him. God in his exact search in the world after its pollution, found not a man but was as ignorant as he was corrupt: *The Lord*

looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God; and the result is, that they were all gone aside, they were altogether become filthy, not a man that doth good, no not one, *Ps.* 14. 2, 3; not a man without blindness in his understanding, as well as depravity in his will and practice; which lest it should be thought to be meant only of a particular deluge of corruption peculiar to that age, the apostle expounds it as a charge against the whole world, comprehended in Jews and Gentiles, *Rom.* 3. 9, 10, 11.

We are no more born with a saving knowledge of God in our heads and hearts, than with a skill in philosophy and mathematics; no nor so much, for we bring into the world a faculty capable of them by ordinary instruction, but incapable of the other without special illumination. The eye is born quite blind to spiritual, but purblind only to natural knowledge. It is as possible to read the law in tables of stone after they are pounded to dust, as to read true notions of God and Christ in lapsed nature. This is excellently described by the apostle; *Vanity of the mind, darkness in the understanding, and blindness of the heart, Eph.* 4. 17, 18. The essential faculties of the rational soul: the mind, the repository of principles, the faculty whereby we should judge of things honest or dishonest: the understanding, the discursive faculty and the reducer of those principles into practical dictates; that part whereby we reason and collect one thing from another, framing conclusions from the principles in the mind: the heart, i. e. the will, conscience, affections, which were to apply those principles, draw out those reasonings upon the stage of the life; all corrupted; one vain, the other dark, and the third stark blind. * And the most ingenious nations for natural knowledge and civil prudence, verify the apostle's character in their brutish actions.

* Moulin Dec. 1. Sermon. 3. p. 75, 76.

The Egyptians, that were men famed for their knowledge, and derived the sciences to the other parts of the world, were worse than beasts in their worship. The Greeks, who counted their Athens the eye of the world, were not more refined, when they adored thirty thousand gods, and some of them infamous for murder and adultery, and had three hundred and twenty-four several opinions about the chief good. And the Romans, eminent for civil prudence, were not much behind them, when they worshipped a fever, and dignified a strumpet with the title of the goddess of flowers. A great philosopher among them takes notice of this ignorance of God in the various notions they have of him. * If you ask an artificer, a poet, a philosopher, a Scythian, a Persian, what God is, you will not find them all of the same opinion.

Even those among the heathens, who for acts of justice and temperance might put men under the gospel to the blush, have had a thick darkness upon them in regard of God. They saw not the bright light which is in the clouds, *Job* 37. 21. The knowledge of God hath been as much out of their ken, as those moral virtues were in their practice. And the proneness of men to idolatry in former ages, while the most intelligent persons in the nature and ways of God were living among them, discovers the greatness of men's natural ignorance. The posterity of Noah in the world were overspread with it, while Noah, Shem, and Heber the father of the Hebrews, were living among them, from whom they heard other instructions. For Noah died in the fifty-seventh year of Abraham; Shem, and Heber, after Abraham's death; the one thirty-five, and the other fifty-four years after, as is gathered from scripture chronology.†

This natural ignorance is in all men by nature. So that Paul had good reason to say, that *the natural*

* Maximus Tyrius Dissert. 1. Sect. 3.

† Vossii Histor. Pelag. lib. 3, part 3. sect. 6. p. 365.

man (which state we are all in as we are born) *receives not the things of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 14. Every man is born with a veil upon his heart, and spiritual things cannot be discerned by a faculty spiritually depraved. This is partial in good men; they have a light in their minds, but obscure. They know but little of God, nor can ever know him to the utmost, nor search him out unto perfection, because he is infinite. And this is in some more, in some less, according to the acuteness or dulness of their natural capacities, their various diverting employments and conditions in the world, or according to the variety of the means of knowledge, which may be in one place more than in another. Some parts of the world have not the sun in that beauty and strength, as it is in others. The best christian heart, in comparison of what it should be, is a land of darkness, not a fully enlightened Goshen. Since original sin hath dealt with us, as the Philistines with Sampson, put out our eyes, they are cured but partially in this world, the perfection is reserved for another.

(2.) This natural ignorance among men under the gospel, is *wilful*. Many have no desire to know what they ought to know of God, that their consciences may not press them to do what they know. They hoodwink themselves, and close their eyes against the light of the glory of God, that they might not see the hideous deformity of their own hearts. That knowledge which is the ornament of the soul, they account the torment of their conscience; are wilfully ignorant, that they may be destroyed more pleasantly and with less fear. How epidemic is this? The light shines upon the head, yet shines into few hearts; is no more regarded by men than pearl by a swine. It is a disparagement to be ignorant in a man's proper art; not counted so to be defective in this, which is of absolute necessity. Other ignorance is condemned, and this affected. *The world by wisdom knew not God*, 1 Cor. 1. 21. The understanding and natural wisdom is em-

ployed in any vile service, rather than enquiries after God ; and with more delight entertains a natural discovery than a divine revelation.

[1.] Men are commonly *contrary* to it. The imaginations which lift up themselves against the knowledge of Christ, are the darlings ; a mighty unwillingness to have them pulled down, and razed to the ground, 1 *Cor.* 10. 5, 6. We have not only an ignorance at our birth, but a stubbornness joined with it ; a *wild ass's colt* is the best term the scripture gives us, *Job.* 11. 12, the wild ass, is the most untamed and unteachable creature.* No beast is more brutish and ignorant, than a child at its birth ; nor any wild creature kicks more against the tamer, than man against the instructions of his Creator. The natural notions of God men are not willing naturally to cherish ; they would raze out the engraven letters ; but since they are so deeply impressed, as not to be obliterated, they fill the characters with dirt, keep them by unrighteousness from being legible ; that they may be secure in the practice of their unworthy principles ; *They like not to retain God in their knowledge, Rom.* 1. 28 ; the beams of an heavenly light are offensive to men, like wild beasts which run from the rising sun into their dark dens, a deaf ear and a stout heart are evident testimonies of an affection to darkness and disaffection to light, *John* 3. 19. There is a natural love to a lie, 1 *Thes.* 1. 11. For this cause God shall send them strong delusions that they shall believe a lie. When God gives men up to a lie, he makes no impression of a lie upon them, as he doth of truth and divine knowledge in the illumination of the Spirit ; but gives up a man to himself, withdraws his light, the natural consequence whereof is to run the road of nature, and believe a lie rather than truth. Since Adam's credulity is the inheritance of his posterity, they take God for a serpent, and the serpent for a god, and are as unwilling to receive the sparks of the one, as they are desirous to entertain the deceits of the other.

* Mercer.

Whosoever hath unworthy and despicable thoughts of God, is averse to any beam that discovers him ; no man can affect to know that which he does not value.

[2.] Men are naturally *conceited that they know enough* of God. There are two deplorable qualities in man. An *incapacity* to understand the mysteries of God, by reason of the dulness of the flesh, and an *unwillingness* to confess his ignorance, by reason of pride and conceitedness. Man by birth, is an headstrong creature ; yet as vain as he is, he would be counted wise, *Job* 11. 12. Vain man would be wise, and that in the things of heaven. Those that know least of God, are transported with an overweening conceit that they know most, that they know enough, and more than enough. As in the sight of God's majesty we think ourselves nothing, so in the ignorance of him we think ourselves more than we are. When sick men conceit themselves sound, they will wilfully refuse any remedy which may convey health ; *Now you say, we see, therefore your sin remains, John* 9. 41. The opinion they had of their knowledge, made them wilfully refuse the cure of their ignorance.

[3.] Men are commonly *negligent* of knowledge. If there be not a sensible contrariety to it, or a foolish conceit that they have no need of it ; though there be a sense of the want of it, yet there is a common negligence in seeking it, and making due enquiries after God. There is a sleep, and a pleasure in sleeping : men love to slumber, *Isa.* 56. 10. Those who cannot endure a darkness in other things, nor acquiesce in a confused knowledge of them without searching into their causes, and reasons or effects, are well contented with a weak and languishing knowledge of God, quickly tired in their pursuits of him ; they look up to the sun, and presently take their eyes off again, glance at spirituals, and fix to naturals. Where is the man who hath intent thoughts upon his Maker and Redeemer ? How little or no time is it that we spend daily in viewing his glories by medita-

tion? How many rise, and lie down, without any reflection upon the author of their lives and motions; and upon the Mediator, who purchased those for them after a forfeiture? Are not the stupendous works of creation visible? the amazing works of redemption legible? Do not sparks of his wisdom rush out of every creature flying round about us? and yet we are lazy in the improvement of them to attain a further sight of that God who is the author of them. Have we not the sun in the firmament of the gospel? but do we cast our eyes often upon it? Do not little fancies please us more than substance? A prodigious sottishness possesses men, under multiplied motives to endeavour after the knowledge of God. How many are there in the world, and in congregations, that never improve one sermon to advance in the spiritual knowledge of God?

(3.) This wilful ignorance, partly from contrariety, conceitedness, and negligence, is *common* among us. There is among us a common knowledge of God, which prevents the world from being a shambles, and preserves the security of his people. It is a guard to the true seed in the world, as the straw and chaff is to the grain of corn. Abimelech's natural knowledge of God, restrained his hands from offering violence to Abraham; but saving knowledge is a fruit not to be found in every hedge. The levity of men in the ways of God is an evidence of it; *Like children carried about with every wind of doctrine*. As want of strength makes the bodies, so want of knowledge makes the minds of children capable of being moulded into any form. The assent is not fully given to divine revelations. They may have some of the seed of the word in their affections, when they have little in their judgments. If there were a spiritual knowledge of God and Christ, why should men be so soon inveigled with error, and fling off the acknowledgement of those truths whence they have confessed they have reaped a harvest of comfort?

What is the reason evil is so often chosen, since

our wills naturally are determined to nothing but under the notion of good, but the blindness of our mind? We never choose evil because it is evil, but because we apprehend it to be good. Where the heart is not won to God, the mind is not enlightened by him. Our little love to him, delight in him, zeal for him, thoughts of him, testify that there are too many dark clouds between him and our understandings. We have no sound sense of his justice, if we tremble not at it; no savour of his holiness, if we do not strive to imitate it. What though we may have a notion of Christ crucified, risen, and ascended? The mystery of Christ is veiled to our eye, if our hearts be sunk into the world and lust: our *darkness comprehends not the shining light*, John 1. 5. It rather stifles the notions of God than is dispersed by them. How soon do we forgot what we seemed to know? Our Saviour laboured to instruct his disciples during the time of his life, in the doctrine of his death; it leaked out of their minds, as if they believed nothing of his former declarations, till the appearance of his person was an irrefragable testimony of the truth of his words. If our knowledge of God were more spiritual, the operations of our souls would be more heavenly. Whosoever knows him, is still flying towards him; creeping earth-worms, lukewarm Laodiceans, careless Gallioes, conceited pharisees, know little, understand less, and savour nothing of God and Christ. Our ignorance of God is too great, because our estimations of God are too little.

To awaken us against a wilful and negligent ignorance. Consider,

[1.] It is *inconsistent* with christianity. He deserves not the name of a christian, who wants the necessary knowledge of a christian: he deserves not the name of a rational and intelligent creature, who neglects the employment of his mind about the most worthy object. Spiritual ignorance does as much unchristian a man that hath the name of a christian, as natural folly unmans a person that hath the shape

of a reasonable creature. Should we call this a world, if there were no sun, or a man, a man that hath no eyes in his head, nor reason in his mind? It would be a shadow of the world, the ghost of a man. Christianity without knowledge is an appearance and nothing else, like the picture of a man without reason. A true christian bewails Adam's loss, endeavours to repair it, to get a light restored to his mind, and a beauty to his soul. He approves of Adam's sin, that sits contented in that darknesss Adam brought upon himself and his posterity.

Can that man be counted a follower of Christ, that is pleased with the plague of nature, which the light of the sun comes to scatter by his beams? Was any poor Egyptian at ease in the judicial darkness, were his groans silent, or his desires weak for the removal of it? Yet how many souls capable of an inheritance of light, sport themselves in the thick fogs of spiritual ignorance? He hath a pagan heart under a christian name, that can talk of the design of the new Adam, and yet be pleased with the predominant darkness and nature of the old. It is against the end of the gospel; the promise concerning the gospel times is, that *the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord*, Isa. 11. 9; not full of the ignorance of God. Light, not darkness, is the glory of a gospel state. The ignorance of the apostles in the time of Christ, concerning the nature of his mediation, the design and end of his death, is intolerable now in any that bear the name of christians. That was before the death and resurrection of Christ, ours after the clear manifestation of that which in the time of his life was obscure to his disciples.

[2.] Ignorance is Satan's *instrument and chain*, whereby he acts men and keeps them in captivity. He obstructs knowledge, and guides us in rebellion by ignorance. The knowledge of God opens the secrets of Satan's kingdom, and reveals the mystery of his government. It is the breaking out of the light of the glory of God in the gospel, that makes

him *fall from heaven like lightning, Luke 10. 18.* None gratify Satan so much as ignorant persons. While this chain is upon the greatest mere moralist, he is as sure under the conduct of the devil, as the profanest wretch. He can be content to let men please themselves with the shadows of virtue, while he can hold them sure by the chain of darkness. He knows he can lead any where those that want eyes to see their way. The darkness of the mind, and the power of Satan, are the same thing; *To turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, Acts 26. 18.* Whosoever is possessed by the one, is not free from the command of the other. Darkness chains Satan to punishment, and darkness chains us to Satan. It is the devil's tool whereby he works in us: he makes a vast use of it in his motions in the world, and his assaults of the soul. He is called *the ruler of the darkness of this world, Eph. 6. 12,* of the dark ignorant principles of this world. The darkness of the heart, whether total or partial, is the handle to every operation of his upon us, and the thicker that is, the stronger second he hath to take his part in all his contests against our spiritual welfare. By our foolish principles he makes work in our fiery passions. The more we understand of God's nature and Christ's offices, the more we shall be able to discern his subtlety, and prevent or withstand his attempts, *Eph. 6. 14. 15, 17.*

[3.] Ignorance of God is *the cause of all sin* in the world. This is the fountain of all the sin that ever was: of the first sin, *2 Cor. 11. 3.* Those sins which are against knowledge of a particular precept, are grounded upon an ignorance of the nature of the Law-giver. Sin springs from an error of imperfection in the understanding. If a false judgment be erected, false orders will be issued, innumerable evils, determinations in the will, and errors in practice will be the consequents: wrong notions of God will give birth to foul evils; a *vertigo* or megrim in the head causeth irregular and unsteady motions in the mem-

bers. Hence it is that the scripture gives the name of folly to sin, and fools to sinners; to forget God is the character of all wicked men. *Consider this, ye that forget God, Psal. 50. 22.* Sin grows from the root of folly.

Why do men give themselves over to commit lasciviousness with greediness? *Because of the blindness of their hearts, Eph, 4. 18, 19.* Why did not the Sadducees believe the resurrection? *Because they knew not the scriptures and the power of God, Matt. 22. 29.* Why are men corrupt in their ways? *Because they say in their hearts, there is no God, Psal. 14. 1.* Why did the ungrateful Israelites provoke God in the wilderness forty years of mercy together? *Because they did err in their hearts, and did not know his ways, Psal. 95. 10.* Ignorance of the glory of God, the nature of sin, and the necessity of proper ways of expiation, was the cause of the greatest wickedness that ever was committed in the face of the sun.

The Jews had framed a false notion of a carnally victorious and triumphant Messiah, that would make them conquerors of the world, and therefore crucified the Lord of glory. This fashions men to lust, *1 Pet. 1. 14*: all wickedness flows out like a torrent, *Hos. 4. 1, 2*, where there are false conceptions of God, or true notions of him misapplied. The motion will be irregular, when men imagine a careless God, or an impure God, that he does not regard our ways, is patient without anger, threatens only to scare, will not damn men to everlasting torment for a small crime; his anger endures not for ever; what will not a man do by those encouragements, upon the invitation of a temptation? When the Gentiles' imaginations of God became *vain*, their practices quickly became *abominable*, *Rom. 1. 21, 24.* Mistakes of God and impudence in sin hold one another by the hand. When the mind is corrupt and destitute of the truth, then break out strife, and envy, and railings, and all the dark passions of hell, *1 Tim. 6. 4, 5.*

There is no foundation in blindness, for any regular walking; hence it is that sins are called works of darkness, but, as some think, never darkness itself, for by that word in scripture is signified error and ignorance. That which hath no being, can have no operation; that which is not known, can never move the conscience. If it be not known, it is so far a non-entity, a thing of no existence; a man can have no gracious operation, because without knowledge of God, he can have no gracious being. It is not so much the pleasure of sin as the ignorance of God, that preserves men's affections to vile lusts; were the pleasures of sin, like Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, seven times hotter, and more sparkling than they are, they could not detain them by their charms, if they had a prospect of the goodness, sweetness, and kindness of God. The beauty of this object would leave in them no spirit for the other. For when the soul knows God to be the chief good, and clearly apprehends him under that notion, all the chains of sin and Satan cannot draw him, nor the allurements of them woo him totally from him. But you may as soon cause an ass with his heavy limbs to run a race as swiftly as a stag, as cause an ignorant person to repent and come to Christ. You may as well find reason in a bat, as repentance, and faith, and spiritual thirst in an ignorant person. As this is the cause of all sin in the world, so the remainders of it is the cause of all the slips in the best of God's people, which cost them so many sad groans. As a total blindness endangers a fall into precipices, so a partial blindness exposeth to many stumblings in the way.

[4.] Wilful ignorance of God is *damning*. If the knowledge of God be eternal life, ignorance of God must be eternal death. Mere ignorance destroys as well as disobedience. Vengeance will be rendered on them that know not God, on heathens that had not a beam of the gospel, as well as on them that *obey not the gospel* revealed to them, 2 *Thess.* 1. 7, 8. If God hides his

gospel from a man, it is a sign of a lost estate. *If the gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, 2 Cor. 4. 4.* Much more when a man hides the gospel from himself, which is not only a neglect of God but a contempt of grace. He affects his own damnation, as he affects darkness that shuts his eyes against the sun, and refuses the benefit of the light. If it be damning where the true notions of God and Christ are not revealed, it is much more when the revelation of him is rejected or abused.

There is so much of God manifested in his works, as renders him in some measure intelligible, and God hath given them a faculty to know something of him, whereby their neglect renders them also inexcusable. How could a man be inexcusable that did not see the sun, if he had a negative inability to see it? God hath given as much light to men in his works as is due to an intellectual nature, and to this end, that men might be inexcusable, *Rom. 1. 20*, that they might be *without excuse*, not noting the event of their neglect, but the design of God's manifestation, that if they did neglect it, they should have no ground for an apology. But where God hath over and above added out of grace a scriptural light, and made the glorious manifestation therein plain, and when the revelation is clearer than that in the creatures, clearer than that in the law, which was called night in comparison of the knowledge in the gospel which is called day: not that the one was absolutely dark, but in comparison of the other, as the night is not absolutely dark because there is a star-light, or some light in the sky, but much short of the light of the day.

Wilful ignorance under such opportunities of knowledge, renders men more deplorable than heathens. Inexcusable is he that hath seen God riding in a chariot of the gospel, and the sun of righteousness moving in the hemisphere of the word, and will not behold that sun by whose light he walks upon the earth and performs his daily affairs. What can be answered when the question shall be put, How came you to be igno-

rant of those things, which have so often been inculcated to you? Ignorant of that God in whom you live and move? Ignorant of that God that shines in every plant, every motion of the heavens, and clothes himself with robes of yet greater glory in his word? There lies as much an obligation upon us to the knowledge of God, as to universal obedience to God. We are bound to enquire after him what he is, what we must do to please him, and how he will be worshipped.

He therefore that is willfully defective in inquiring after God and searching into his will, hath no intent universally to obey him: if he had, he would take pains to know him and what would please him, which is necessary to a state of salvation. We know what the fate of those is that have no intention of universal obedience; it speaks the heart set upon sin, and a fear of coming to be acquainted with any thing that may hinder them from committing it. A man ignorant of God and Christ can no more recover out of his mortal disease, than a sick man can without the knowledge of an able physician, and the application of a sovereign remedy. It is only by the knowledge of Christ that we have justification from our guilt, *Isa.* 53. 11. No man can be freed from guilt by ignorance; to think to be saved by ignorance, is the same as to imagine to live without a knowledge of food, and to be happy without acquaintance with the necessary means of happiness.

That which is our sin, can never be our apology; and being a gross sin, is so far from excusing, that it renders itself more grievous, and the condemnation more terrible. And though it be said that Paul *obtained mercy, because he did it ignorantly in unbelief*, *1 Tim.* 1. 13; it will give no comfort to those that are wilfully ignorant, unless they can prove that Paul was one of that rank; he did what he did ignorantly, because the gospel was never revealed to him, till Christ revealed it from heaven. It is likely he was furious against the christians by an implicit faith in

the pharisee's determinations, as well as out of a zeal of the law. By the same reason that any would palliate their ignorance by this, and imagine a salvation because of that, they may fancy unbelief also to be a cause of obtaining mercy, which no man that owns the scripture can have any pretence to.

To conclude, wilful ignorance of God and Christ under the gospel does not procure a single damnation, but one with the most terrible circumstances, a condemning sentence with God's mock and laughter, turning his delight and compassions to a pleasure in his vengeance. *Turn you at my reproof, behold I will pour out my Spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called and you refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded, but you have set at nought all my counsel, I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh.*

PART VII.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, A SOURCE OF
HAPPINESS.

Saving knowledge inseparable from happiness—They who know God are wiser than all other men—The knowledge of God an evidence of grace—The influence of this knowledge upon afflictive dispensations—Happiness in the degrees of it—The office of Christ to pity and relieve the sensibly ignorant—The earnest of future happiness—God will not hide from his people any thing necessary to be known.

SECOND. **T**HIS subject is a great *comfort* to those who have this saving knowledge of God. Is it not an high satisfaction to be in the light, while many others are in darkness, to have an acquaintance with the Creator and Redeemer, while others have a familiarity only with the devil? As he that is ignorant of God, is miserable, though skilled in all natural and moral knowledge, so he is transcendently happy, who knows his Creator, though blockish in all the arts in the world. If he were possessed with as great a wisdom as Solomon, he could have no addition to his essential happiness. As the fruition of God in the

end is the sole blessedness of a creature, so the knowledge of God is the sole means to blessedness without any thing else to piece it out. Christ in the text mentions nothing else in concomitancy with it: *This is life eternal to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*, this and nothing else, this without any thing besides. Such a one is in union with the highest truth, he hath a spring of spiritual life within him, a divine manna that nourishes his soul to everlasting life. It is a comfort that God hath fixed the fitness of the soul to enjoy him, not in a natural strength of the understanding, but in an affectionate knowledge of him, a qualification all are capable of. If only wise men and men eminent for speculation were capacitated for eternal life, how few would God have to know him or enjoy him? But the meanest man that hath neither opportunity nor capacity for an elevated contemplation of God, may attain this spiritual knowledge and an elevation of affection to him.

(1.) Such an one knows *more* than all the carnal world besides. What the world knows of God is by a common illumination, as Christ is *the light which enlighteneth every man that comes into the world*, and by the largeness of a natural capacity; but what a christian knows of God is by a divine infusion, strait union, by a particular act of God making Christ *wisdom* to him, 1 Cor. 1. 30. He knows him not only by a natural instinct as the world does, and as beasts know their proper food and what is convenient for them, but by a special revelation, an inshining, a choice favour not indulged to every one; *To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given*, Matt. 13. 11. a gift out of his secret cabinet, not out of his common exchequer. How comfortable was it to the shepherds to have the revelation of the birth of Christ, which was concealed from the pharisees and grandees of the Jews! God darts out a divine light upon whom he pleases, he re-

freshes babes with his beams, while he leaves the wise and prudent with their blind eyes in the dark. Poor fishermen had this privilege, which was denied to the towering philosophers of the world. And almost all the revelations of Christ there were among the heathens, were communicated to the weaker sex, some women called Sybils, who had a prophetic spirit of those things; some of their prophecies are true, though not all true which is inserted in their oracles; they knew more than all the rest of the world. The eye is a little member, but it views at once the whole surface of heaven within its reach; a little saving light from God gives a man a prospect of such glorious things, which reason cannot reach, a little spiritual light with the constant assistance of the Spirit, shall behold more of God than the mightiest intellect without it, as a little eye with a multitude of sparkling spirits shall see further and clearer than a greater without that assistance. Many men of the deepest insight and quickest parts are furthest from the knowledge of God.

(2.) It is *an evidence of grace* to have a transforming, affectionate knowledge of God and Christ. No wicked man *understands*, *Dan.* 12. 10; i. e. experimentally, affectionately, transformingly. Ignorance is a sign of gracelessness, spiritual knowledge is a fruit of the Spirit, and a sign of all the other fruits of it; for it is a covenant mercy, and flows from God's being our God, and it is a fruit of the *grace of God given us in Christ* to be enriched with it, *1 Cor.* 1. 4, 5. The clearness of the church's eyes, like the fish pools of Heshbon, in the apprehension of spiritual mysteries, is part of her beauty in the summary description of it, *Cant.* 7. 4. The eyes are the organs of sight, and the instruments of knowledge which convey objects to the understanding. It is a sign of a man's being in covenant with God, to have an heart to know him; *I will give them a heart to know me, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, I*

will put my law into their mind, Jer. 24. 7. Heb. 8. 11.

The great promise of the new covenant was, that they should know God better than under all the rudiments of the law; a knowing God by a law in the heart, as well as by a notion in the head: for the law written in the heart, is a reason rendered why they should know God. He speaks not of a knowledge that lies in the common field, but a knowledge hedged in, and peculiar to the covenant children of God, the heirs of heaven, and brethren of one family, not to all that bear the name of christians; for it is such a knowledge as is accompanied with sanctification of the heart, *Heb. 8. 10.* and justification of the person; *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities, I will remember no more,* ver. 12.

Where this knowledge is, it is a sign of the special favour of God, since it is a gift only in his own power, (God does not use so solemnly to promise that, which is within our common reach) and is conveyed by a special act of the Spirit. It being a covenant mercy, it is a cabinet mercy. Men without it are in the chains of darkness and the devil; those that have it, are freed from Satan's yoke. What a comfortable thing is it, to be within the arms of the everlasting covenant? Where covenant graces are bestowed, all covenant blessings will of right follow.

(3.) What comfort may such have in *all kinds of afflictions*? This, like musk, will perfume the most loathsome dungeon. We have enough if we have this spiritual knowledge of God, though we want all things else. Death cannot be dreadful, when Christ is known and felt in the power of his grace. The view of Christ raised the heart of Stephen above fears and anguish, when stones were ready to break in pieces the case of his body; *He saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,*

Acts 7. 55, 56. This knowledge is the strongest cordial : the sweetness of this surmounts the bitterness of the other. When the sun is clearly seen, the high winds do rarely trouble the mariner. In death we need the greatest supports, and what greater than to consider you are going to one you know? Though you change your place, yet not your acquaintance ; you pass to a strange country, but not to new company. And indeed afflictions are so far from being ground of discomforts, that they are rather cordials in the issue, because they advance us more degrees in this knowledge which is the means of eternal life.

We often learn more of God under the rod that strikes us, than under the staff that comforts us ; *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes : the law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver, Psa. 119. 71.* If the sun should perpetually shine in our hemisphere, how could we understand God's workmanship in those little spangles of the heavens? Though the night hide from us the beauty of the sun, yet it discovers the brightness and motions of the stars. God had not been at all discovered to us without the bleeding afflictions of Christ ; nor is not fully learned of us without our own. Daniel was in captivity, when he had the most perspicuous visions of Christ. John in exile in Patmos, when he had the revelation of Christ's walk among the candlesticks, and the methods of God in the affairs of the church ; and Paul mounts up in choicer apprehensions of spiritual objects, as upon eagle's wings, in his epistles to the Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, which were written when he was in bonds at Rome for Christ, wherein appears an higher flight, a stronger ardour, a more divine efficacy of Spirit in him. This spiritual knowledge of God and Christ, prepares us for afflictions, comforts us in them, and is enlarged by them.

(4.) Comfort in the *measures and degrees* of know-

ledge. It is eternal life to know God and Jesus Christ ; Christ regards the quality, not the quantity. The disciples who were present with Christ in this prayer, and of whom he acquaints his Father that they had known him, had but little knowledge, yet it was true and sound, though not in such great measures as afterwards. Not that this should be encouragement to laziness ; for the small measures in them before the death of Christ, are inexcusable now under greater means than they had before the coming of the Spirit upon them after the Redeemer's death and resurrection. All believers have not the same measure of knowledge, yet all have the truth of it ; there are degrees of knowledge as there are of grace ; God distributes the knowledge of himself according to the nature of the several subjects, as the sun does light to the stars according to their several capacities.

All the apostles in the time of Christ's being in the world, had not the same measure, and clearness of insight. Peter confesses him to be the Son of God, when the rest were silent ; and none after seems to have the knowledge of Christ and his mysteries, in the same elevation with Paul ; yet all had a sufficiency of knowledge both for themselves and others. Nay, believers themselves have not at all times the same sparkling measures of light ; as the sun shines clearer in some parts of the day than in others, yet in every part of the day there is light enough for men to perform their affairs by.

Look to the quality of your knowledge, that it be sound, spiritual, transforming, as well as to the quantity. See what savour attends it, what affections it engenders ; not what speculations it raises. A great heat with a little light, is better than a clear light with a hard frost, and benumbed limbs. The spiritual eye, as well as the natural, is opened by degrees. Bless God for what you find ; rest not in twilight, but long for stronger beams. Look to God for light : *They looked to him and were lightened, Psal.*

34. 5. Look not to Moses and the prophets, but as the means; look to Christ, who is the light that enlightens every man that comes into the world. The more we look upon him by faith, the fuller of his beams shall we take them off. A look towards him attracts light from him, a look towards the sun clears all things about us.

(5.) And let me add, that it is the office of Christ in heaven to *pity us, and relieve us in our bewailed ignorance*. He that prayed thus, and asserts the knowledge of God and of himself to be eternal life, is ordained by God an high priest, to *have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way*, *Heb. 5. 1, 2.* As he pities his people under the remainders of sin, so under the remainders of darkness the cause of the other. It is one of the greatest troubles of a gracious soul, that he knows no clearer; and the Mediator's strongest compassions are exercised about that which is his people's urgent distress. What hath Christ compassions for, but to exert upon their greatest perplexity? What use were they for, if the proper object of them be neglected? He hath all his offices to remove the fruits of our Fall. The darkness of the mind was the first, and the cause of all the mischiefs since. If the disordered understanding be not cured, no saving work can have its full effect.

This being the root of our misery, is the first proper object of our Saviour's compassions. His compassions are his qualification for every office: were he not compassionate, his royalty would rather be a tyranny, his priesthood an empty title, his prophetic office an idle name. As he pleads against the guilt of sin, which as a priest he hath expiated; as he pleads against the power of sin, which as a king he hath broken: so he pleads against the remaining ignorance of the soul, which as a prophet he is expelling. As it was his business at the first to declare God, so it is still his employment more fully to dis-

cover him. As he owns the gift of his Father's power in the text, to spread this knowledge; so he promiseth in the same prayer to be faithful in his office; *I have declared thy name and will declare it, John 17. 26.* He was the light of men, not only at his incarnation, but before; no age or period of time was there, wherein he scattered not some illumination in the world. *He was the light of men, John 1. 4. and lighted every man that came into the world, John 1. 9.* Nor is he less pitiful to men's ignorance, and industrious to remove the continuing shadows in the hearts of his people, than he was before.

As he is the author of their knowledge, as well as their faith; so he will be the finisher of the one, as well as the other. He is a *sun of righteousness*, and is to do spiritually, what the sun doth naturally, send forth his light to disperse the darkness and his influence to heal the barrenness of the soul. The natural sun indeed pierces by its influence the obscure bowels of the earth, which by reason of their thickness, obstruct the entrance of his beams: but the sun of righteousness bestows not his influence without his light. He is first a prophet to enlighten, before he is a spirit to quicken, in the first work. He is the same in the progress; as we cannot have spiritual life before light, so we cannot have an increase of spiritual life, without an increase of spiritual light; and to this purpose he took our nature, that he might pity and remove our darkness. Is not this a comfort to have the glass of his word below, wherein to see him; a spirit within, to wipe and clear our eyes; and an high priest above, to exercise his compassions towards us upon this very account?

(6.) The saving knowledge of God any have, is *an evidence* of a future state, of a happy vision, and *an earnest* of their arrival to it. Since it is the means of eternal life, there must be an eternal life, the issue of this knowledge. Of what use are means that are

without an end? Since nothing can satisfy the soul here, nor can our souls with a perfect contentment know God, through the grates and lattices of a dark body, with the scales and shades upon the mind; there must be a time wherein a glorious liberty from prison shall be conferred, *Rom. 8. 21*, the shadows fly away and a contenting vision be bestowed upon a longing heart, otherwise the soul could not have an happy and satisfactory eternal life. Not to have such a knowledge as to satisfy the full desires, would be half an eternal death; not answering the vastness of the power the Father bestowed upon the Son for the conferring it, nor answering the compassions of the Son to the ignorant in removing the hinderances. Besides, the more knowledge there is here, the hotter the thirst for more. As God is the author of those sparks we have, so he is the author of that heat which ariseth in the soul by those sparks.

It cannot be supposed that a God of infinite goodness, who created man for the fruition of himself, and after he was dead in sin revived him, and planted in him quick and ardent desires for himself, should do this without designing a full satisfaction to him, which never any of the choicest spirits had in this world, and therefore must be in another. Where do you find any blessed soul at rest here? David is still upon pursuit after a sight of the glory of God; Paul still reaches forward to the things before, and breathes after a full apprehension, putting up petitions for all whom he had the care of, and affection to, that they might be enriched with all knowledge, understand the riches of glory, be filled with all wisdom. Does it consist with such a watchful, sincere, and unspotted goodness of God, to raise and continue such inclinations in his creatures, to encourage and influence them, and never to render them completely satisfied? Shall God thus let any soul that hath had a glimpse of him, lie groveling, and panting, without reaching out his hand to lift him up, and unveiling his face in

time to him to behold his glory? Annihilation had been better than boundless desires, eternally unsatisfied, and eternally languishing.

The understanding, the noblest faculty, first seized upon by God, will not always want the noblest contentment in the view of its proper object. The sun communicates not itself to the air, but by the enlightening of it. God is *the Father of glory*, as well as of grace; and is a Father of grace, in order to his being a Father of glory. God does not design to mock his creatures, or to defeat the desires of his own exciting. It is in point of knowledge, as well as other things, that *God is our God*, Jer. 24. 7. He will one day be our God in the highest perfection of all the fruits of the covenant, so that ignorance as well as sin and infirmity shall be chased far from us. The covenant will want its full accomplishment, till the dim knowledge of God be drowned in a perfect and clear vision: and since the shadowy light we have, is so delightful, how ravishing must that be, which shall discover God in his full glory! If the earnest be so pleasing, how delightful shall be the full fruition, since an earnest is the least part of the sum contracted for!

(7.) Where God communicates the knowledge of himself, and his Son, he will not hide from gracious souls *any other knowledge* necessary for them in the world. The giving the greater, is an assurance the less shall not be withheld which may further them in that which is the principal end. Yea he sometimes reveals his secret purposes to them concerning his transactions in the world. God would not conceal from Abraham his determination concerning Sodom, because he had been acquainted with the grand secret of his mercy in the Messiah; *Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do, seeing that all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?* Gen. 18. 17, 18. Have I manifested my gracious purpose to restore mankind to my favour, and the means how I will do

it, which the heart of man could never think of, and so many hundred years are to run out before it be accomplished, and shall I make a difficulty to acquaint him with my intended judgment upon Sodom? God often gives those that know him, a sense and sight of judgments he intends to bring upon a people. *Who is wise and he shall understand those things?* Hos. 14. 9. Both the threatenings and promises contained in that prophecy.

END OF VOL. V.





